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ARTICLES

Hasidism and Modern Man — MARTIN BUBER 109

Christianity, Rationality, and Faith — C. J. DUCASSE 121

The Place of Religion in Human Action — ROBERT N. BELLAH 137

Isaac Newton: Religious Rationalist or Mystic? — RICHARD S. WESTFALL 155

BOOK REVIEWS

Swami Nikhilananda, ed.: *The Upanishads* (GEORGE BOSWORTH BURCH) 171

Kishimoto Hideo and John F. Howes, ed. and transl.: *Japanese Religion in the Meiji Era* (D. C. HOLTOM) 174

Philip Carrington: *The Early Christian Church* (EDWARD ROCHIE HARDY) 178

E. Harris Harbison: *The Christian Scholar in the Age of the Reformation* (ELISABETH F. HIRSCH) 182

Robert M. Kingdon: *Geneva and the Coming of the Wars of Religion in France* (Charles Garside Jr.) 185

Shelton Smith: *Changing Conceptions of Original Sin* (Daniel D. Williams) 189

Holtan P. Odegard: *Sin and Science* (Charles W. Kegley) 191

Paul Tillich: *Systematic Theology. Volume II. Existence and the Christ* (Daniel D. Williams) 194

Edwin A. Burtt: *Man Seeks the Divine* (Philip H. Ashby) 200

C. G. Jung: *Symbols of Transformation* (Gotthard Booth) 203

William Ernest Hocking: *The Meaning of Immortality in Human Experience* (J. S. Bixler) 207

John Hick: *Faith and Knowledge* (Jean A. Potter) 211

Book Notes 215

Among the Periodicals 220

Index 227

HASIDISM AND MODERN MAN

MARTIN BUBER
(Translated by Maurice Friedman)

IT IS MORE THAN FIFTY YEARS since I began to acquaint the West with that religious movement known as Hasidism, which arose in the eighteenth century but extends into our time. If today, reporting and clarifying, I wish to speak of that work as a whole, this is not—I think I can say this with confidence—for the sake of my personal work. In performing this work I never had anything else in mind than an honest artisan does when he carries out a commission to the best of his ability. I speak, rather, for the sake of that to which my work wished and wishes to point. Much in it has at times been misunderstood and needs clarification.

Commission, I said—but is this comparison permissible? Was there one who commissioned? No, there certainly was not; no one told me that he needed what I then made. And yet, neither has it been a literary project. There was something that commanded me, yes, which even took hold of me as an instrument at its disposal. What was that? Perhaps just Hasidism itself? It certainly was not this. Hasidism wishes to work exclusively within the boundaries of Jewish tradition and to concern no one outside of them. It was—so I might even venture to express it—something that hid itself in Hasidism and would or rather should go out into the world. To help it do this I was not unsuited.

Now I was still at that time, to be sure, an immature man; the so-called *Zeitgeist* still had power over me. To my readiness to make an adequate testimony to the great reality of faith disclosed to me through books and men was joined something of the widespread tendency of that time to display the contents of foreign religions to readers who wavered between desire for information and sheer curiosity. Besides, I did not yet know how to hold in check my inner inclination to transform poetically the narrative material. I did not, to be sure, bring in any alien motifs; still I did not listen attentively enough to the crude and ungainly, but living folk-tone which could be heard from this material. At work in me here, too, was a natural reaction against the attitude of most Jewish historians of the nineteenth century toward Hasidism, in which they found nothing but wild super-

stition. The need, in the face of this misunderstanding, to point out the purity and loftiness of Hasidism led me to pay all too little attention to its popular vitality. Thus I can today to some extent still affirm these early attempts as a piece of work; as fulfillment of the task placed upon me, however, they have long since ceased to satisfy me. The representation of the Hasidic teaching that I gave in them was essentially faithful; but where I retold the legendary tradition, I still did so just as the Western author that I was.

Only in the course of the decade that followed the first publications did my authorship become a service, even though its independence could naturally only grow, and not lessen.

In the year before the first World War the approach of the first stage of a catastrophe, in the most exact sense of the term, became evident to me. At that time, I gradually began to realize what later, after the end of the war, fulminated within me to certainty: that the human spirit is either bound to existence or, even though it be of the most astonishing caliber, it is nothing before the decisive judgment. Note well, this was no question of a philosophical conviction; it was not a question of what is usually described as existentialism. It was a question, rather, of the claim of existence itself, which had grown irresistible. The realization that at that time grew in me, that of human life as the possibility of a dialogue with being, was only the intellectual expression of just this certainty or just this claim.

At the same time, but in a special osmosis with it, my relationship to Hasidism was ever more basically transformed. To be sure, I knew from the beginning that Hasidism was not a teaching which was realized by its adherents in this or that measure, but a way of life, to which the teaching provided the indispensable commentary. But now it became overpoweringly clear that this life was involved in a mysterious manner in the task that had claimed me. I could not become a Hasid. It would have been an unpermissible masquerading had I taken on the Hasidic manner of life—I who had a wholly other relation to Jewish tradition, since I must distinguish in my innermost being between what I am commanded and what I am not commanded to fulfill. It was necessary, rather, to take into my own existence as much as I actually could of what had been truly exemplified for me there, and that means, of the realization of that dialogue with being

whose possibility my thought had shown me. I say, to be sure, 'task,' and I say, 'It needed to be done.' But in truth there was never anything like an intention or a project—it happened only as it happened.

That is what I sought to indicate when in the spring of 1924, in the Foreword to one of my Hasidic books,* I wrote: "Since I began my work on Hasidic literature, I have done this work for the sake of the teaching and the way. But at that time I believed that one might relate to them merely as an observer. Since then I have realized that the teaching is there that one may learn it and the way that one may walk on it. The deeper I realized this, the more this work, against which my life measured and ventured itself, became for me question, suffering, and also even consolation."

Out of these transformations the work has taken shape in the special form in which I have now for the most part retold the crude and shapeless traditional material. It is, in my opinion, a valid form of literature, which I call legendary anecdote. It has not developed out of literary presuppositions on the path of literary attempts, but out of the simple necessity to create a verbal expression adequate to an overpowering objective reality. It was the reality of the exemplary lives, of the lives reported as exemplary, of a great series of leaders of Hasidic communities. They were not reported in connected biography, but just in a tremendous series of instances, limited events in which something was at times spoken, not seldom, however, only done, only lived. Yet even the dumb happening spoke—it told the exemplary. And, indeed, it did not tell it didactically; no "moral" was attached to the event, but it spoke, even as a life-event speaks, and if a saying was included, its effect too was like that of a life-event. But since the whole was handed down in crude formlessness, the new teller was obliged to reconstruct the pure event, nothing less but also nothing more. Thus grew the form of the legendary anecdote. It is called anecdote because each one of them communicates an event complete in itself, and legendary because at the base of them lies the stammering of inspired witnesses who witnessed to what befell them, to what they comprehended as well as to what was incomprehensible to them; for the legitimately inspired has an honest memory that can nonetheless outstrip all imagination.

* Martin Buber, *Der Grosse Maggid Und Seine Nachfolge* (Frankfurt; Rütten and Loening, 1924).

This form has enabled me to portray the Hasidic life in such a way that it becomes visible as at once reality and teaching. Even where I had to let theory speak, I could relate it back to the life.

But I became more and more aware of a fact that has become of utmost significance to me: that the kernel of this life is capable of working on men just today, when most of the powers of the Hasidic community itself have been given over to decay or destruction, and it is just on the present-day West that it is capable of working in an especial manner. After the rise and decline of that life in the Polish, Ukrainian, Lithuanian ghettos, this kernel has entered into a contemporaneity, which is still, to be sure, only reminiscent, only an indication in the spirit, but even so can accomplish something in this manifestation that was basically foreign to the reality of that time. From here comes an answer to the crisis of Western man that has become fully manifest in our age. It is a partial answer only, not an ideological one, however, but one stemming directly out of reality and permeated by it. That life arose once as the reply of the primal Jewish faith to the utterly unfruitful exaltation of the pseudomessianic movements of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries which confounded redemption and liberation, even as they confounded the divine and the human. It opposed to this salvational confusion a hallowing of the everyday in which the demonic was overcome through being transformed. But now its spiritual remnant may be summoned to speak its word in the crisis of modern man.

II

What is of greatest importance in Hasidism, today as then, is the powerful tendency, preserved in personal as well as in communal existence, to overcome the fundamental separation between the sacred and the profane.

This separation has formed a part of the foundations of every religion. Everywhere the sacred is removed and set apart from the fullness of the things, properties, and actions belonging to the universal, and the sacred now forms in its totality a self-contained holiness outside of which the diffused profane must pitch its tent.

The consequence of this separation in the history of man is a twofold one. Religion is thereby assured a firm province whose untouchableness is ever again guaranteed it by the representatives of the state

and of society, not, for the most part, without compensation. But at the same time the adherents of religion are thereby enabled to allow the essential aplication of their relation of faith to fulfill itself within this province alone without the sacred being given a corresponding power in the rest of life, and particularly in its public sphere.

In Judaism the border between the two realms appears at first glance to be drawn with utmost sharpness. To one coming from the outside, the great mass of rituals appears like something existing for itself. Moreover, even from within much testifies to the sharpness of this separation: thus the invocation of God spoken at the end of the Sabbath as that which separates the sacred from the profane. One need only note how many everyday actions are introduced by a blessing, however, to recognize how deep the hallowing reaches here into what is in itself unsanctified. One not only blesses God every morning on awakening because he has allowed one to awaken, but also when one begins to use a new house or piece of clothing or tool because one has been preserved in life to this hour. Thus the simple fact of continued earthly existence is here sanctified at each occasion that offers itself and thereby also this occasion itself. The concept is progressively formed, however, that the separation between the realms is only a provisional one. The commands of the religious law, accordingly, only delimit the sphere which is already claimed for hallowing, the sphere in which the preparation and education for every action's becoming holy takes place. In the messianic world all shall be holy. In Hasidism this tendency reaches a highly realistic consummation. The profane is now regarded only as a preliminary stage of the holy; it is the not-yet-hallowed. But human life is destined to be hallowed in all its natural, that is, its created structure. "God dwells where one lets Him in," says a Hasidic saying; the hallowing of man means this letting in. Basically the holy in our world is nothing other than what is open to transcendence, as the profane is nothing other than what at first is closed off from it, and hallowing is the event of opening out.

Here a misunderstanding must be avoided. One readily ascribes to Judaism a "religious activism" which does not know the reality of grace and pursues vain self-hallowing or self-salvation. In reality, in Judaism the relation between man's action and God's grace is guarded as a mystery, even as that between human freedom and God's all-knowing, a mystery which is ultimately identical with that of the rela-

tion between God and man. Man cannot take himself in hand, so to speak, in order to hallow himself: he is never in his own hand. But there is something that he has retained as a creature, something that is given over just to him and expected just from him; it is called the beginning. A saying explains the opening word of the Hebrew Bible, the word *b'reshit,* "In the beginning," in this fashion: the world was created for the sake of the beginning, for the sake of making a beginning, for the sake of the human beginning-ever-anew. The fact of creation means an ever renewed situation of choice. Hallowing is an event which commences in the depths of man, there where choosing, deciding, beginning takes place. The man who thus begins enters into the hallowing. But he can only do this if he begins just as man and presumes to no superhuman holiness. The true hallowing of a man is the hallowing of the human in him. Therefore the Biblical command, "Holy men shall you be unto me" has received Hasidic interpretation thus, "*Humanly* holy shall you be unto me."

In life, as Hasidism understands and proclaims it, there is, accordingly, no essential distinction between sacred and profane spaces, between sacred and profane times, between sacred and profane actions, between sacred and profane conversations. At each place, in each hour, in each act, in each speech the holy can blossom forth. As an example that rises to symbolic heights, I cite the story of Rabbi Shmelke's sleep. In order that his study in the holy books should not suffer too long interruption, Rabbi Shmelke used to sleep in no other way than sitting, his head on his arm; but between his fingers he held a burning candle that awakened him as soon as the flame touched his hand. When Rabbi Elimelech visited him and recognized the still imprisoned might of his holiness, he carefully prepared for him a couch and induced him with much persuasion to stretch himself out on it for a while. Then he shut and darkened the window. Rabbi Shmelke only awoke when it was already broad daylight. He noticed how long he had slept, but it did not bother him; for he felt an unknown, sun-like clarity. He went into the prayer house and prayed before the community, as was his custom. To the community, however, it appeared as if they had never before heard him, so did the might of his holiness compel and liberate all. When he sang the song of the Red Sea, they had to pull up their caftans in order that the waves rearing up to the right and the left should not wet them.

Here the anti-ascetic character of Hasidic teaching also finds expression. No mortification of the flesh is needed, for all natural life can be hallowed: one can live it with holy intention. The Hasidic teaching likes to explain this intention in connection with the kabbalistic myth of the holy sparks. With the "breaking of the world-vessels," which in the era before creation could not withstand the creative overflow, sparks have fallen into all things and are now imprisoned in them until ever again a man uses a thing in holiness and thus liberates the sparks that it conceals. "All that man possesses," says the founder of Hasidism, the Baal-Shem, "conceals sparks which belong to the root of his soul and wish to be elevated by him to their origin." And he says further, "Therefore one should have mercy on his tools and all his possessions; one should have mercy on the holy sparks." Even in food there dwell holy sparks, and eating can be holier than fasting; the latter is only the preparation for hallowing, the former can be hallowing itself.

What Hasidism here expresses mythically is a central knowledge that is communicable only in images, not in concepts. But it is by no means exclusively bound to this one mythical tradition. The same teaching is expressed in a wholly different, biblically-based image: "Every creature, plant and animal offers itself to man, but by man all is offered to God. When man with all his limbs purifies and hallows himself to an offering, he purifies and hallows the creature." Here the concept becomes still clearer that man is commissioned and summoned as a cosmic mediator to awaken a holy reality in things through holy contact with them.

The same basic thought attains expression, not in such traditional form but in a wholly personal way, in the conversation which has been preserved for us of a great *zaddik* with his son. He asks the son, "With what do you pray?" The son understands the meaning of the question to be, On what meditation do you base your prayer? He replies, "Everything of great stature shall bow before Thee." Then he asks the father, "And with what do you pray?" "With the floor," answers the father, "and with the bench." This is no metaphor; the word "with" is now meant quite directly: in praying the rabbi joins himself to the floor on which he stands and the bench on which he sits—they, the things that are, to be sure, made by human hand, yet like all things have their origin in God, help him to pray. And he helps them pray, indeed;

he raises them, the wooden floor and the wooden bench, to origin, to their origin, he "elevates" them.

But this "elevation" is by no means to be understood as removing the worldly character of things or spiritualizing the world, although something of this is to be found in Hasidic doctrine. The life of which I speak, the exemplary life, has proved itself stronger than the thought, and in the measure that the teaching became the commentary of this life, it had to adapt itself to it. What is ultimately in question here finds naive yet true expression in another narrative. It is told of a zaddik that one once spoke before him of the great misery of the human race. Sunk in sorrow, he listened. Then he raised his head. "Let us," he cried, "draw God into the world, and all will be stilled." One must not understand this bold speech as if a presumptuous "activism" comes to words in it. It stems rather from the same spirit as that saying which we have already quoted, "God dwells where one lets Him in." God wants—that is the meaning of it—to dwell in the world, but only when the world wants to let Him in. Let us, the Hasidic rabbi says to the world, prepare for God a dwelling-place into which he desires to enter; when it is prepared by us, by the world of its own will—we let God in. The hallowing of the world will be this letting-in. But grace wants to help the world to hallow itself.

None of this presupposes, however, that God does not dwell in His creation. That would indeed contradict that verse of the Scriptures where it is said of God, He makes His dwelling "with them in the midst of their uncleanness," a verse which does not speak, to be sure, of a permanent dwelling—that would be described otherwise—, but just of a temporary residing. Also the post-Biblical conception of the Shekina, later given manifold mythical development by the mystics and intimately familiar to Hasidism, the conception of the divine "indwelling," a hypostasis or emanation that joins itself to the human race exiled from Paradise, or to Israel driven out of its land, and wanders with it over the earth—it too means only the divine participation in the destiny of His sinful and suffering creation: the work of the "stilling" of this suffering, of which the Hasidic tale speaks, is no longer of a historical nature. Here, as ever again in Hasidism, the eschatological conception breaks into the lived hour and permeates it.

We must, therefore, distinguish within Hasidic life and Hasidic

teaching between two kinds of "letting God in." This distinction can be clarified through looking once more at two different sayings.

The one is attached to the conception of the Shekina. The verse of the Psalm, "A stranger am I on the earth, do not conceal from me your commandment," was expounded thus by a zaddik: "You are, like me, a stranger on the earth and thy indwelling has no resting place: So do not withdraw yourself from me, but disclose to me your commandment so that I can become your friend." God helps with His nearness the man who wants to hallow himself and his world.

In order to understand correctly what manner of existence is meant here, we will do well to place another saying of the same zaddik by its side: "The sparks which fell down from the primal creation into the covering shells and were transformed into stones, plants, and animals, they all ascend to their source through the consecration of the pious who works on them in holiness, uses them in holiness, consumes them in holiness. Thus is the man created who calls himself a stranger on earth.

The second saying stems from a later zaddik. It runs, "The peoples of the earth also believe that there are two worlds; 'in that world,' they say. The difference is this: they understand the two worlds to be removed and cut off from each other. But Israel believes that the two worlds are one in their ground and that they shall become one in their reality."

Only the two sayings taken together give us the basic content of Hasidic faith.

III

The central example of the Hasidic overcoming of the distance between the sacred and the profane points to an explanation of what is to be understood by the fact that Hasidism has its word to speak in the crisis of Western man.

This crisis was already recognized by Kierkegaard a hundred years ago as an unprecedented shaking of the foundations of man as man. But it is only in our generation that we have seriously begun to occupy ourselves with the fact that in this crisis something begins to be decided that is bound up in the closest manner with a decision about ourselves.

Modern thinkers have undertaken to give a causal explanation of the crisis through various partial aspects: Marx through the radical "alienation" of man caused by the economic and technical revolutions and the psychoanalysts through individual or even collective neuroses. But no one of these attempts at explanation nor all of them together yield an adequate understanding of what concerns us. We must take the injured wholeness of man upon us as a life burden in order to press beyond all that is merely symptomatic, and grasp the true sickness through which those motifs receive the force to work as they have worked. Those who, instead of this, contemplate the cruel problematic as a subject of unsurpassable interest, who know how to describe and even perhaps to praise it, contribute, at times with the highest gifts, to the massive decisionlessness whose true name is the decision for nothing.

An especially threatening trait of the crisis is the secularized form of the radical separation between the sacred and the profane. The sacred has become in many cases a concept empty of reality, now of merely historical and ethnological significance. But its character of detachment has found an heir. One no longer knows the holy face to face; but one believes that one knows and cherishes its heir, the "spiritual," without, of course, allowing it the right to determine life in any way. The spirit is hedged in and its claim on personal existence is warded off through a comprehensive apparatus; one can now enjoy it without having to fear awkward consequences. One has ideas, one just has them and displays them to one's own satisfaction and occasionally also to that of others. One seems to take them with grim seriousness; but that must be the end of it. One enthrones them on golden thrones to which their limbs are chained. No false piety has ever attained this concentrated degree of inauthenticity.

Only now has one basically got rid of the holy and the command of hallowing.

Over against all this behavior of present-day man, Hasidism sets the simple truth that the wretchedness of our world is grounded in its resistance to the entrance of the holy into lived life. The spirit was not spun in the brain; it has been from all eternity, and life can receive it into human reality. A life that does not seek to realize what the living person, in the ground of his self-awareness, understands or glimpses

as the right is not merely unworthy of the spirit; it is also unworthy of life.

Especially important within the secularized division between the above and the below is the sickening of our contact with things and beings. The thinking of the age knows how to speak about things and beings in an illuminating fashion, but the great insight that our relations to things and beings form the marrow of our existence seems to have become alien to life. The Hasidic teaching of the holy intercourse with all existing beings opposes this corrosion of the living power of meeting as the progressive evasion of man before the meeting with God in the world.

IV

I have not converted the message of Hasidism into solid concepts; I was concerned to preserve its mythical as well as its epic essence. I cannot concur with the postulate of the hour—to demythologize religion. For myth is not the subsequent clothing of a truth of faith; it is the unarbitrary testimony of the image-making vision and the image-making memory, and the conceptual cannot be refined out of it. No sermonic teaching can replace the myth; but there can certainly be sermonic teachings that are able to renew it through bearing it uninjured into the present. In order that this may be possible, where myth has taken on a gnostic nature, i.e., where it has been employed to represent the mystery of transcendent being as knowable, it must, of course, be freed from this nature, this unnatural state, and restored to its original condition. Such restoration and renewal was accomplished by Hasidism with the myths permeated by gnosis that it took over from the Kabbala. My transmitting of the Hasidic message is no speculative theology; where myth is here perceivable, it is one that has entered into the lived life of seven generations, as whose late-born interpreter I function.

In this form I have sought, in a life-long work, to introduce the Hasidic life-teaching to present-day Western man. It has often been suggested to me that I should liberate this teaching from its "confessional limitations," as people like to put it, and proclaims it as an unfettered teaching of mankind: Taking such a "universal" path would have been for me pure arbitrariness. In order to speak to the world what I have heard, I am not bound to step into the street. I may remain

standing in the door of my ancestral house: here too the word that is uttered does not go astray.

The Hasidic word says that the worlds can fulfill their destiny of becoming one through man's life becoming one. But how can that be understood? Is then a completed unity of living being thinkable anywhere else than in the transcendence itself? Israel's confession of the oneness of God says, indeed, not merely that outside of Him there is no God, but also that He alone is unity. Here the interpreter must enter in. If man can become "humanly holy," i.e. become holy as man, in the measure and in the manner of man, and, indeed, as it is written, "to Me," i.e., in the face of God, then he, the individual man, can also—in the measure of his personal ability and in the manner of his personal possibility—become one in the sight of God. Man cannot approach the divine by reaching beyond the human; he can approach Him through becoming human. To become human is what he, this individual man, has been created for. This, so it seems to me, is the eternal core of Hasidic life and of Hasidic teaching.

CHRISTIANITY, RATIONALITY, AND FAITH *

C. J. Ducasse
Professor of Philosophy, Brown University

The questions to be considered in what follows are four: (i) To what extent, if any, is it possible to justify rationally the set of dogmas or doctrines professed by the large numbers of persons who call themselves Christians; (ii) What specifically is meant by describing a set of religious beliefs as rationally justified, or on the contrary as non-rational or irrational; (iii) Whether faith is a special kind of knowledge; and (iv) Whether appeal to faith is a rational act.

Turning now to the first of these questions, we find ourselves faced with the difficulty of selecting in a manner not itself dogmatic the particular dogmas to be regarded as constituting the content of the Christian faith; for many of the persons who call themselves Christians would not call Christians certain of the others who also call themselves Christians; but would call them instead heretics or perhaps even pagans because some of the dogmas regarded as essential by the former are rejected by the latter.

How difficult it is for practical purposes to determine which are and which are not "the Christian beliefs" may be illustrated by a situation wich arose in the town of Waterloo, Iowa, a few years ago. An Associated Press dispatch dated October 11, 1952, reported that a resident of that town had died and had left a will directing that his estate, which was substantial, should go to such of his relatives as were believers in Christianity. The dispatch further stated that a law suit had been instituted by ten nephews and nieces of the testator, to set his will aside on the ground that there is no agreement as to what constitutes a Christian. To support their contention, they brought in seven clergymen of various denominations. Their conceptions of what a person must believe in order to be a Christian diverged so much that they could come to no agreement.

I may add that, although I would call myself a Christian, yet large numbers of the persons who so call themselves would, if acquainted with my religious beliefs and disbeliefs, undoubtedly conclude that I

* This paper was originally presented as a lecture under the John Herschel Morron Lecture Foundation at Hamilton College.

can be said to be a Christian only in a highly Pickwickian sense of the term! For that sense is one which would not exclude my calling myself also a Buddhist; and this would not do at all in the eyes of the theologians who would make of Christianity a monopoly in restraint of salvation.

What Jesus himself might have decided if called upon to judge is not easy to imagine; for of course he had never heard of the religion, now called Christianity, which theologians and Church Councils began to construct about him in the centuries after his death; and which they have since been ceaselessly and diversely elaborating, as supposedly implicit in the words of his nobly simple message of love.

The remark that Jesus himself was no Christian may, I fear, sound rather irreverent to some of my readers. I must therefore at this point state explicitly that that remark, and others to follow which might give a similar impression, are no made in any spirit of light-hearted iconoclasm or of wanton irreverence. For no matter how irrational, vague, erroneous, or groundless may be the religious ideas which a person manages to believe, I have not the least desire to undermine, upset, or alter them if they perform effectively for him, and through him for society, the important functions which I conceive to be those peculiar to religion. If his religion does this, and he is not militantly intolerant of the more or less different religions which do the same for persons more or less different from himself, then his religion is a good one for him to have. As I see the matter, the chief value of conversion from one religion to another is that the convert is usually very much in earnest about the religion he embraces, whereas a person's belief of the religion in which he has been brought up often becomes perfunctory and little more than verbal with the passage of the years, and thus gradually ceases to be functional. But if it has remained beneficently functional then by all means let him keep it.

But although I am desirous of avoiding wanton irreverence, I am equally concerned to avoid wanton reverence! For each of these two attitudes is equally foreign to the true philosophical spirit as I conceive it; and on the present occasion it is in my capacity as a philosopher that I am writing, not in my capacity as a private person having, like most others, religious beliefs and disbeliefs of his own.

The supreme allegiance of the philosopher *qua* philosopher is to verifiable truth, to logical validity of reasoning, and to clarity and

distinctness of statement. Of course, being only human, he cannot in practice help falling more or less short of these ideals; and when he does so he should be called to account, and forgiven if he repents and tries to reform. On the other hand, he betrays these ideals and is unforgivable if, instead of recanting his departures from them, he rationalizes away those departures—passing off pretentious obscurity of statement as profundity; dignifying as intuitions beliefs precious to him but unverifiable; substituting for knowledge dogmatic assertions wishfully postulated as authoritative; inventing distinctions where no differences exist, or confounding one name things really different; and misrepresenting as logical reasonings trains of thought which would at once be perceived to be only pseudo inferences, were they not decked out in figurative or sentimentally pious language.

Unfortunately when philosophers, launching into the sort of adventure called theologizing, have occupied themselves with the beliefs of the particular religion of which they happen to be adherents, they have too often erected habitual indulgence in just those kinds of philosophical sins into a method—one assumedly peculiar and proper to that enterprise.

But the truly philosophical attitude towards religious as well as other beliefs is, I hold, comparable to that of the trained and conscientious physician when engaged in checking up on the state of health of a patient. The first thing he does is to get the patient completely undressed—something which, on a social instead of a medical occasion, would of course be the extreme of disrespect. Then the physician pokes at the patient's giblets and listens to their ticking, in a way which on social occasions would constitute most indiscreet eavesdropping. By means of pharyngoscopes, otoscopes, gastroscopes, and other instruments of observation, he looks into the cavities of the patient with a thoroughness which, if judged by the rules of etiquette, would be termed intolerably rude peeping. And if, in the course of this peeping he sees anything that looks to him suspicious, he does not hesitate to clip a little piece of meat off the writhing patient for a biopsy.

All this unsparing scrutiny, which in the ordinary situations of social intercourse would constitute flagrantly irreverent invasion of the privacy to which persons are then entitled, is, by the physician in his office or at the hospital, carried out without any thought of irreverence. Indeed, to refrain from the most searching investigation out of

respect for the patient's social privacy would, in the physician, constitute wanton reverence. The business of a medical examination is to get at the facts, and the examination is made under the tacit assumption of both physician and patient that, even if the facts turn out to be distressing, nevertheless it is best in the long run to know them. For one may then be able to go intelligently about remedying them.

On the other hand, if the patient's prospective run is not long but short; or if he is too stupid or ignorant, or too much addicted to self-indulgence, to do anything about improving his condition, then there is little point in forcing upon him a knowledge of how bad that condition is. Or again, if, however queer may be his habits, his diet, or his mode of living, yet they happen to agree with his own perhaps queer constitution, then there is no point in attempting to induce him to change them. All this, which is true as between a physician and his patient, is of course all the more so as between a physician and persons who do not ask him for diagnosis or medical counsel, but only meet him socially.

Now, I conceive that a generally similar situation obtains as between a philosopher and the variety of persons to whom he may have occasion to speak. When these persons are religious but are not curious to view their religion in rational perspective; or when they are not intellectually equipped, or emotionally detached enough, to profit instead of losing by so viewing their religion; then—unless perhaps they are aggressively intolerant of religious beliefs other than their own—the philosopher's duty is to refrain from remarks which would be interpreted by such hearers only as wantonly irreverent instead of as enlightening.

On the other hand, when the persons a philosopher addresses are ones reflecting enough to be curious about the nature of religion and its distinctive role in human life; *and* they expect him to talk to them about this in general or specifically in the instance of their own religion; *and* they are in addition persons educated and intelligent enough to understand what he may have to say and to value such light as it may provide, instead of only being shocked by the unsparing pertinacity of his analyses; *then* it is the philosopher's duty to put aside considerations either of reverence or of irreverence, and—like the physician described a moment ago—to make his comments on religion hew as strictly as he can to the line of verifiable fact, of rigorously ra-

tional inference, and of clear and distinct statement—letting the possibly sharp chips fall where they may.

Now, the second of the two kinds of audiences just described is the one which I believe myself to be now addressing; and I shall therefore proceed accordingly to the best of my ability.

First, then, in order that there may be no uncertainty as to the beliefs I shall be referring to in the sequel when speaking of the Christian beliefs or the Christian faith, a number of them may now be listed—it being understood that no claim is being made that the list is exhaustive or that all of the items listed are accepted by all the persons who call themselves Christians.

At the head of the list may perhaps be placed the beliefs that there is one and only one god, and that this god is three persons and one substance. Then there is the belief that this god is almighty, all-knowing, and wholly good. Also, that he created man and the world; that the Bible, directly or indirectly, represents the words of that god addressed to man; that Jesus Christ is the only begotten son of that god; that, by his suffering and death, he atoned for the sins of men who accept him; that Jesus, after having died, came again to life; that he eventually rose in the air and disappeared into a cloud on his way to heaven; that there is for man after death a fleshly life that has no end; that that life will be in a heaven or in a hell, according to the individual's good or evil life while on earth; and so on.

Throughout this list, I have of course spelled the word "god" without the capital initial which, in devotional as distinguished from analytical contexts, is appropriate as invitation to reverence; or else which automatically makes of the word "god" a proper name, and thus tacitly begs the question of the existence and uniqueness of a being bearing that name.

Let us now turn to the second of the four questions listed at the outset. That question concerns what specifically is meant by describing a set of religious beliefs as rationally justified, or on the contrary as irrational or non-rational. Evidently, a clear understanding as to this is necessary before the question as to the rationality, or not, of the beliefs listed and of other Christian beliefs can be answered intelligently.

Some idea of the sort of account I would offer of what entitles a belief to, or disqualifies it from, being termed rationally justified will already have been gathered from my earlier declaration that clarity of

statement, logical validity of inference, and demonstrable veridicality of the content of assertions, are the ideals to which a philosopher *qua* philosopher owes supreme allegiance. Sincere endeavor to live up to them of course presupposes that when a philosopher speaks in his professional capacity on the subject of religion, he abstracts for the time being as completely as he can from such articles of religious faith as he may privately cherish or abhor; just as a physician is ethically bound to keep out of his professional judgments of the condition of his patients such personal liking or dislike as he may privately feel towards particular patients.

So much may perhaps be taken as obvious without need of additional elaboration, concerning the attitude which the philosophical ideals dictate to the philosopher when he discusses religion in his professional capacity. Those philosophical ideals themselves, on the other hand, must now be described a little more fully; for together they define what, in the comprehensive sense, rationality of belief consists in.

First, then, concerning the ideal of clarity of statement. It means, for one thing, that the terms employed shall be not figurative but as literal as possible. Again, that their meaning shall be, or shall be made, unambiguous both in extension and in intension; that is, on the one hand, that no doubt shall be left as to which things a given noun is intended to indicate and which to leave out, on the particular occasion of its employment; and similarly on the other hand, that no room for doubt shall remain as to what characteristics a given adjective is intended to predicate, and to negate, in the particular context in which it is being employed.

Again, clarity requires that the nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs used in a statement shall be ones mutually congruous in meaning. For example, the adverbs "considerately" and "inconsiderately" are not congruous in meaning with any verb that does not signify some mode of voluntary behavior. Hence it would be an incongruity to affirm and equally to deny, assertorically, that a tile, blown off the roof by the wind, did, *inconsiderately*, hit a passerby on the head. Not an assertoric but only an apodictic statement would, in the instance, be free from incongruity—a statement namely, that the tile *could not have* hit the passerby considerately—or inconsiderately either—since its motion through the air was anyway not voluntary.

Similarly, the predicate "has succeeded" cannot without incongruity

be either affirmed or denied of persons other than ones who "have tried." They constitute the class of subjects about which alone that predicate can, without incongruity, be predicated whether affirmatively or negatively. Every adverb and every adjective, taken in the sense it is intended to have on a given occasion, similarly has what may be called a realm of congruous, relevant, or nonabsurd applicability. But, of course, that a given application of it *is* congruous leaves quite open the question whether the application of it is in addition true, or on the contrary false. These remarks on the logic of congruity and incongruity may seem themselves incongruously technical in the present context. Yet there are religious questions to which they are directly relevant; for example, the question whether the applying of certain adjectives, or the addressing of prayers, to an impersonal god as conceived by some forms of pantheism, is not incongruous to the nature of a god so conceived.

Lastly, clarity of statement requires that the referent of each pronoun, and of each qualifying clause, shall be obvious; and also that the dialectical relationships, which the various statements entering in discourse are intended to have to one another, shall be made unmistakable by introduction of the appropriate conjunctions or conjunctional phrases.

Turning now from the ideal of clarity of statement to that of validity of inference, little need be said about it except to stress that the latter does not apply only to deductive inferences whether based on formal or conceptual implications. It applies equally to inductive inferences from statistical or experimental data, or from observations confirming or disconfirming theorethical conjectures; also, to inferences from circumstantial evidence; and to inferences based on human testimony. The validity or invalidity of all these kinds is of course a matter only of the relationship—whether conforming to the laws of probability of violating them—which obtains between the data and the conclusions of those inferences.

But unless the data were in addition known to be true, the conclusions, however validly inferred from the data used, do not constitute knowledge, even of probabilities. Hence, that the data should consist not of gratuitous assumptions, or of wishful or pious beliefs, but of verified facts, is also one of the demands of the philosophical ideal. It is of particular importance to note in connection with the require-

ment of truth or factuality, that merely the mutual consistency or coherence of a set of statements does not in the least guarantee that any of them is true. The existence of novels and mythologies makes evident that logically systematized sets of statements purely fanciful, or definitely false, are not only possible but indeed frequent. The theologies of religions other than our own would by most of us be regarded as patent examples of this.

Keeping in mind what has now been said as to what constitutes rationality or irrationality of belief, let us turn to consideration of the Christian beliefs listed earlier.

That the statements of several of them violate the requirement of literalness is perhaps most tellingly shown by the fact that if I were to develop even a little the implications which those statements would plainly have if their wording were taken literally, I should certainly then be accused of attempting to ridicule those revered beliefs. But if the statements of them are not meant to be taken literally, the fact that they then sin against the requirements of unambiguity is made patent enough by the many divergent attempts of theologians to say what precisely those statements are to be taken to mean. An example would be the variety of interpretations of the doctrine of the atonement which have been elaborated in the course of the centuries.

To exhibit in any detail the many respects in which the Christian beliefs listed fail to meet the demands of rationality would take far more space than is here available. But one or two flagrant examples will perhaps be enough to illustrate the fact.

The first to suggest itself is the logical incompatibility between the existence of evil in the world, and the belief that the world was created by an omnipotent, omniscient, and wholly good God. The many tortured attempts of the writers of theodicies to do away with that incompatibility are, when viewed by the daylight of reason, plainly seen to have quite failed to reconcile those irreconcilables.

I am well aware, of course, that the theological notion of human "free will" is employed for the very purpose of reconciling them. But to make that notion appear capable of doing the trick, it is necessary to pack tacitly into it the assumption that a contradiction is involved in supposing that man's will could have been created good in addition to free. The complete gratuitousness of that assumption, however, becomes evident as soon as one explicates on the one hand what it means

to say that a man has "free will," and on the other what it means to say that his will is good: That he has "free will" means in the present context simply that, when a good and an evil course are the alternatives before him, he can embrace the one or the other, as he wills; i.e. the good one if he prefers it, or the evil one if it is the one he prefers. And to say that a man's will is in addition good means that although he can indeed choose evil if he wills it, yet in fact he never so wills, but actually always chooses the good—and this not out of compulsion, but just because his preference runs that way.

Only the vagueness of the notion of "free will" employed by theologians to exculpate the postulated creator of men from the evil men do obscures the fact that "free will" and goodness of will are thus entirely compatible. Why then should not an omnipotent creator that were himself good endow men with both?

If one wishes to cling anyway to the belief in a personal creator, and still to conceive him in a manner which would be morally compatible with the godliness ascribed to him, then the obvious solution of the difficulty just stated consists in postulating him as having only finite even if very great power, and as doing the best he can with such power as he does have. Such a god would of course be well worth having; for the problems of man, in the presence of which he prays to his god for aid, are always finite and therefore do not require that that god should have infinite power; but only power enough to render the aid prayed for. The theologian's postulation of the god he believes in as infinite in power, which is what both generates and renders insoluble the "problem of evil" is perfectly gratuitous. Such a god is strictly *de luxe,* the infinity of his postulated power being but an extravagant gift which man fondly offers to his own megalomania.

In all the preceding statements, I have spoken of the god in which monotheists, or more specifically Christians, believe, as being *postulated* by them. The reason for so speaking is, of course, that the classical arguments for the existence of that god, as well as the many more or less ingenious variants of them, and also the so-called moral arguments, are, all of them, logically defective; so that they neither prove the existence of that god nor show it to be more probable than not. Many of my readers probably are already aware of this; but any attempt to substantiate that contention now is in any case ruled out by lack of space. I can therefore only refer anyone who might wish to

know how I would propose to support it, to what I have written elsewhere on the subject.

The irrational character of the particular Christian beliefs I have now briefly touched upon could easily be shown to pertain equally to the others. How comes it, then, that man, *homo sapiens,* the "rational animal," should in such large numbers nevertheless accept those beliefs? This is the question to which we may now pass.

The answer is to be found partly in the fact that those beliefs are commonly introduced into the minds of Christians-to-be at an early age, when the child has not yet developed the critical power and acquired the stock of information which together would enable him to scrutinize the credentials of those beliefs before admitting them into his mind.

Another factor, which psychologically accounts for a good deal, is that those beliefs are presented always clothed in the solemn and sonorous words of the creeds, of prayers, of sermons, or of hymns—words which, being heard again and again thereafter, and always in the atmosphere of reverence, of piety, and often of beauty, which pervades churches and religious ritual, soon acquire a quasi hypnotic effect.

The ideas put in that stately language thus enter and function in the mind much in the same psychological manner as do those one receives in the reading of poetry: In both cases, the psychological context is of a kind in which rational scrutiny of the ideas concerned would automatically be felt as incongruous, and indeed, in the case of the religious ones, as irreverent. The ideas, therefore, spontaneously assume the status not of items of information, but rather of *sources of feelings*—solemn, sublime, or reverent; of *painters of grand images*—cosmic and eschatological; and of *generators of inspiration* to humility, trust, and noble conduct. Moreover, in order that the Christian beliefs should function in this manner, the statements of them do not need to be literal, or clear, or objectively true, or logical—or, in short, rational. They need only to be believed. And their believers, like the vast majority of human beings, are rational only when there is little emotional temptation to be otherwise; which is seldom. Hence the irrationality of the beliefs, escaping as it largely does the notice of persons themselves largely irrational, does not make the beliefs unbelievable by them.

When, in the religion of the Greeks, the Egyptians, or the Hindus, we find statements, different indeed from those of the Christian be-

liefs, yet of the same broad types—that is, cosmological, eschatological, apocalyptic—we class them without a moment's hesitation under the heading of mythology. Hence it does not even occur to us to ask for proofs of the existence of the gods of those religions—of Zeus or of Hermes; of Osiris or of Isis; or of Brahma, Vishnu or Shiva. Nor does it occur to us to launch into the framing of elaborate hermeneutic conjectures that would rationalize the irrationalities which the traditional statements about those gods patently contain when taken as statements of objective facts.

But when the beliefs we consider are those of the religion to which we have been conditioned from childhood and which the large majority of our associates profess, then automatically our attitude is radically different from that which we have towards the beliefs of those other religions. Man's natural egocentricism causes us tacitly to assume with regard to our own religious beliefs—as with regard to our own language, our own customs, and the other peculiarities which the accident of time and geographical location of our birth has wished upon us—that *they* are true, right, or proper; or in short are the standards by which the rationality or irrationality of beliefs and customs different from ours are to be judged. It is such egocentricism alone which inhibits us from classing under the head of mythology the cosmological and eschatological beliefs of our own religion as we do those of the Greek, Egyptian, or Hindu religions.

Instead, we take the statements of the beliefs we caught from our own environment as being anyhow somehow, statements of fact; as statements, that is to say, which may indeed be irrational if taken literally, but for which it *must* be possible, with sufficient ingenuity, to find some sense that makes them rational.

Now, the attempt to discover or invent such a sense is what is known as theology; and the process by which it grows and proliferates is that which psychologists call rationalization. It consists, there as in other instances, in the devising of suppositions which, if true, would constitute reasons for believing what we already believe without reasons; that is, believe simply out of certain instinctive psychological longings and of the workings of social contagion described earlier.

The basis of the whole theological edifice—or I should rather say, of the several theological edifices—thus consists of a set of beliefs for the truth of which there is no evidence—or at best only evidence too flimsy to establish even a probability—but which are accepted as au-

thoritative on the ground that, directly or indirectly, they are revelations from "God;" this ultimate premise, however, having itself of course the status only of an item of pious faith, not of something demonstrably true or probably true.

But now if, as contended in what precedes, there is no evidence that the Christian beliefs are objectively true, or even that they are more probably true than not, then does it not follow that those beliefs and the religion based on them are worthless?

Although this might at first sight seem to be a necessary consequence, it does not really follow at all. The moral teachings of Jesus are noble and precious, even if there is no good reason to take as necessarily true the theological opinions which he also enunciated. Moreover, the ambiguity and vagueness of meaning of the Christian beliefs, their internal inconsistencies, the absence of evidence that they represent objective facts, and so on—in short the irrationality which, on critical examination of them, becomes patent, and which for scientific purposes would radically vitiate them,—is, for religious purposes, of little or no importance.

The grounds on which I would maintain this have already been adumbrated in passing, but they must now be stated explicitly. They consist on the one hand of the sort of merit which faith is capable of having, and on the other of what I take the nature of religion essentially to be. The account of these grounds now to be offered will automatically constitute an answer to the third and fourth of the questions stated at the beginning, namely, may not faith be a special kind of knowledge? and, is not appealing to faith perhaps after all a rational act?

The claim that faith is a peculiar kind of knowledge, or anyway that faith is a virtue, is tacitly made in Christian homiletic addresses whenever the word "faith" is spelled with a capital initial or is uttered in a tone of reverence. But what exactly does faith turn out to be when examined in the clear light of reason?

A distinguished and pious American philosopher, Professor Raphael Demos, in a paper presented to the American Philosophical Association a few years ago, defined "faith" as "belief which rests on no evidence whatever"; but I would not myself put it quite as strongly as this. I would rather say that faith is belief which, in degree or in content or both, goes beyond what the evidence possessed, if any, rationally warrants.

On the other hand, knowledge is belief warranted by evidence and limited in degree and in content to what the evidence warrants—that is, knowledge is belief based on evidence rationally sufficient to prove that what is believed is true or at least more probably true than false. Hence faith is not knowledge at all, of any kind—not even in cases where what was believed without evidence turns out to have anyway been true; for to guess right is one thing, and to know is another.

But if faith is indeed belief, firm and strong, of things for the truth of which one has no adequate evidence, then it is hard to see why faith should be held a virtue and meritorious instead of foolish. Hence, if "to appeal to faith" is to urge a person to believe without exercising his critical power—or, to put the matter more figuratively, is to invite him to shut his eyes, open his mouth, and swallow without chewing whatever may be stuffed into it—then to appeal to him to do such an irrational thing is hardly itself a rational act, unless perhaps one has personally something to gain by inducing the other man to behave thus irrationally.

However, there is more than this to be said about faith, and the rest of the story is more edifying. It is that there are certain beliefs, the mere believing of which can have valuable psychological effects, irrespective of whether the beliefs happen to be objectively true or false. One such effect consists in the courage, strength and calm generated in a person faced with a difficult task that he does not know whether he can do, if he approaches it with faith that he can do it, instead of hesitantly because of doubt that he can succeed. In cases of this kind, faith that he can do it tends to make true that he will be able to do it.

Another kind of valuable psychological effect which certain beliefs are capable of having no matter whether they are objectively true or false is to generate in the believer states of mind intrinsically good, or to motivate behavior of instrumentally good kinds on occasions when other motivation for it is lacking or insufficient.

In the case of beliefs which, simply in virtue of their being believed, tend to have desirable psychological effects of one or another of these kinds, "appeal to faith," in the sense of appeal to hold those beliefs strongly and firmly, is obviously a rational act: It is rational in the case of such beliefs when they are *not positively irrational,* but only *non-rational* in the sense that evidence as to their truth or falsity is either equally lacking or equally balanced. And even in the case

where the psychologically beneficent beliefs concerned are *positively irrational,* exhortation to hold them firmly is a rational act when their irrationality is not so glaring as to make them unbelievable to the persons addressed, *and* when no rational beliefs having the same psychological virtues are available, or, if available, would not be believable by those particular persons.

But of course beliefs, again irrespective of their objective truth or falsity, can have evil instead of good psychological effects of the types mentioned: they can be discouraging or distressing, or they can motivate stupid or pernicious conduct. And the capacity of beliefs to cause good effects, or evil ones, of these types, is not limited to beliefs specifically religious. Therefore, since our present concern is centrally with religious beliefs, it is necessary now for us to ask what anyhow is religion, and just what the relation is between a religion and the beliefs which, because belonging to it, are said to be religious.

At first sight, the most plausible way of defining religion in general would seem to be in terms of some basic set of beliefs that were shared —even if under more or less diverse specific forms—by all the religions of the world, primitive and advanced, monotheistic, polytheistic, pantheistic, and non-theistic. But no such common core of beliefs has been turned up by students of the religions of mankind.

Hence it appears that what determines us nevertheless to call "religious" all the very diverse systems of beliefs to which in fact we apply that name can only be certain distinctive functions which, in diverse cultures, those diverse beliefs tend alike to perform—functions which, it is true, the religions have not performed very efficiently; but to the performance of which none of the other institutions of human culture has been dedicated, or which any of those other institutions has to any but a minor extent performed up to the present even as well as religion has, no matter what the future may hold in this respect.

A religion, I therefore now submit, is any set of beliefs—together with the observances, feelings, and injunctions based on them—which, in so far as dominantly believed by a person, tend to perform for him personally, and for society through him, certain highly important functions.

The personal function consists in giving to the individual some degree of serenity and steadiness in the ups and downs of life, especially

on occasions when nothing else avails to do so. The beliefs termed religious are ones which then give him strength in times of weakness; calm in moments of danger; courage in times of despair; dignity under obloquy, frustration, or injustice; comfort in loneliness or in sorrow. But whereas in times of adversity the beliefs called religious function thus as a tonic, in times of intoxicating prosperity they function as a sedative. They foster humility in times of success; prudence in moments of optimism; moderation and a sense of responsibility in the exercise of power over other men; and they inhibit the pride and arrogance which high positions invite.

The social function of the beliefs to be classed as religious, on the other hand, relates to the many occasions where conflict exists between the interest of the individual and that of society. At such times, the selfish impulses, which are strong and immediately aroused, tend to rush the individual into acting for his own benefit without care for what the cost of his doing so may be to others. Therefore, in order to inhibit him from so acting in cases where that cost would be unfair, society attaches legal sanctions to various forms of conduct that would be detrimental to the social interest. And, in kinds of cases which it would not be practicable to codify, the unwritten laws of public opinion similarly put pressure on the individual, dependent as he is in many ways on the good opinion of his fellows.

But neither of these two sorts of sanctions has any psychological leverage on a person tempted to commit an evil act, if he thinks he can manage to remain undetected or if he happens to be in a position of such power as to place him beyond the reach of those sanctions. Religious sanctions, on the other hand, are capable of operating even in such cases. Belief in, for example, a just god, from whom no human act or thought can be hidden, and whose power transcends any which kings or dictators can command, is capable of inhibiting enactment of man's selfish impulses, or of mitigating their ruthlessness. The very mysteriousness of that god and of his ways spurs the imagination, which can influence emotion and behavior more powerfully than does sober knowledge of the sanctions of the law and of public opinion; for these are understood, and the individual may feel able to evade them. And it is worth noting that beliefs, which in the manner just described cause a man to behave in ways beneficent to his fellows even if he has little or no benevolent feelings towards them, tend in

the long run to generate such feelings in him—on the psychological principle that, as a man habitually acts, so does he tend eventually to feel. Religious beliefs, through the exercise of their social function, thus indirectly operate as educators of the heart.

From the conception of religion which has now been outlined, it follows that religious beliefs are essentially psychological tools for the performance of the important personal and social functions described. A belief is religious if, in proportion to its fervor in the person holding it, it operates to perform them. A psychological tool, however, like any other, can be damaged, or can be perverted to uses at variance with those it was designed to implement. Because of this, religion has caused much evil. But of course, so has medicine, similarly through the ignorance, stupidity, or perversity of the persons who had recourse to it; and yet the verifiable functions each aims to perform are essentially good and of great importance.

The Christian beliefs, of course, do not present themselves as psychological tools, but *mean* to be objectively true and *claim* to be so. And this is perfectly proper. But so do the beliefs which, in other religions, we recognize as mythological. In so terming them, however, we are tacitly underestimating the potency of myths. Myths are for us psychologically ineffective only when they are not our own myths. But when they are our own, that is, are believed by us, then myths are powerful motivators—far more powerful for most men, today and probably for centuries to come, than are rational considerations and objective facts relating to the questions the myths purport to answer.

In conclusion, I must therefore emphasize again that myths, or articles of religious faith, do not, in order to perform their vital psychological functions, need to be logical, or clear, or mutually consistent, or objectively true, or, in short, rational. They need only to be of kinds relevant to those functions; *and* to be believable by the mostly rather uncritical persons to whom they are addressed; *and* to be believed by them firmly and sincerely enough to be translated into practice. The irrationality of the beliefs is not important. The religions, including Christianity, have tacitly but wisely always proceeded on the sound principle that it would not be rational to treat persons who are not rational as it would be rational to treat them if they were rational.

THE PLACE OF RELIGION IN HUMAN ACTION

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It is an interesting convergence that at a time when social scientists, notably Talcott Parsons and his coworkers in the theory of action, are beginning to speak of systems of human action on several levels as boundary maintaining systems, some of our major theologians, notably Paul Tillich, are asserting that religion has a special involvement with what they call the "boundary situation." When the social scientists speak of a society or a personality as a boundary maintaining system, they mean that a relative stability must be maintained both within the system and between the system and the situation in which it is located if the system itself is not to be dissolved. A biological organism is an example of such a boundary maintaining system with which we are all familiar. When such a system dissolves we say that it dies. We now know that personalities and social systems can also die. What the theologians are talking about is a little less easy to understand. A person in the religious boundary situation, we are told, experiences tremendous anxiety, but he may also undergo there an experience of tremendous faith. He has felt the threat of utter annihilation in the divine abyss but may find the power of the divine potentiality. Is there any way that we can relate these two uses of the boundary concept? Are the theologians referring, metaphorically perhaps, to a boundary which the social scientists can observe or conceptualize? Perhaps some consideration of actual empirical data may help us to answer those questions.

First I might quote a remark recorded by a field observer in a small Texan town in western New Mexico. The words are those of one of the more respected older men in the community:

> I think most everyone here is a believer when it comes to a showdown. You may not think this when you just look at our actions, when we're making good money and in good health we don't think or talk much about it. But when it comes down to rock bottom and we have to say one way or the other, I think that most people would say they believe.[1]

[1] Evon Z. Vogt, unpublished field notes.

And, to carry the discussion a step further, from a sonnet of Gerard Manley Hopkins which begins,

> No worst, there is none. Pitched past pitch of grief,
> More pangs will, schooled at forepangs, wilder wring.

I quote:

> O the mind, mind has mountains; cliffs of fall
> Frightful, sheer, no-man-fathomed. Hold them cheap
> May who ne'er hung there.[2]

I would suggest that both the Texan's "rock bottom" and Hopkins' "cliffs of fall" are symbols for the boundary situation. It is clear from the first remark that religion to this gentleman at least, is not primarily a matter of the everyday and the routine, of times when people are making good money and are in good health. Rather religion is specially relevant in situations which involve a "showdown," situations in which, presumably, good money and good health are either absent or irrelevant. In these situations one comes to "rock bottom" and belief enters the picture. It would not perhaps be over-interpreting to say that belief here actually forms the rock bottom: it provides a defense, a limit beyond which a person cannot be driven. Hopkins indicates still further implications of this situation. He as it were has looked over the edge of rock bottom and sees no bottom at all. He makes to us the awful declaration that there is no worst, the abyss is limitless. By hanging on the verge of this cliff of fall he makes known to us the full meaning of the boundary: over it lies dissolution. But even this can for Hopkins become a comfort to serve in a whirlwind:

> all/Life death does end and each day dies with sleep.

It is of interest that the central symbolism of several of the world's great religions also point to the existence of a religious boundary situation. In these symbolic events a religious leader or group seem to be on the verge of utter annihilation, but the moment of greatest danger becomes the moment of greatest triumph. Such for example is the crossing of the Red Sea by Moses and the children of Israel; or the meeting of the Buddha seated beneath the Bodhi tree on the verge of enlightenment with the concentrated forces of cosmic evil. Such also is Muhammad at the moment of the Hijra, the flight from Mecca to

[2] Gerard Manley Hopkins, *Poems* (3rd Ed.), New York, 1948, p. 106.

Medina, a moment of supreme danger and promise which begins the Muslim era; and such of course is the crucified Christ.

Without going on to further examples we may simply say here that it seems likely that religion usually is concerned with situations which involve some sort of threat to the continued existence of a human action system, whether a personality or a social system. Thus we can say that religion is concerned with a boundary situation, using the term boundary in the same sense that social scientists do. But what kind of threat is involved and what is the boundary? Many people have tacitly realized for a long time that religion is a boundary process and have tried to identify the boundary. In the nineteenth century one attempt to solve this problem maintained that religion is called forth by the primitive fear of the forces of nature. Religion then would be a rather crude attempt at adaptation to nature. Religion is, to this way of thinking, primitive science, and magic is primitive technology. Another nineteenth century explanation sees religion not so much as a crude form of adaptation to nature as a disguised weapon in the struggle for power. Here the boundary would be that across which collective social goals are attained and the threat would be the possibility of the failure to attain these goals. This view on the one hand sees religion as the opium of the people, as an ideological weapon in the hands of an entrenched power group, and on the other hand as a disguised form of ideological protest on the part of some oppressed class. Thus the Protestant reformation represents the ideological struggle of the rising bourgeoisie against feudalism represented by Roman Catholicism. Still a third view which attained a clear expression in the years around the turn of this century held that religion is especially concerned with social integration, that it is to be explained as a kind of social cement. In this view God or other symbols of the divine do not represent half-understood forces of nature, nor are they embodiments of the morality of different classes, as the previously mentioned theories would hold. Rather that which is the real referent of the symbol God is Society itself, in its totality. The boundary here is that protecting social integration and the threat is the dissolution of society into its component elements.

There is no need now to subject these three theories to detailed criticism. Suffice it to say that each of them succeeded in illuminating certain aspects of religious behavior in a way that had not previously

been done, but all of them failed to develop a comprehensive explanation of the totality of religious action. The common feature of these three theories, and the one to which their collective failure is, in my opinion, to be attributed, is that they do not treat religious action as independently variable but rather seek to reduce it to a one to one correlation with some inherently non-religious form of social action. Religion, they all say, is not what it seems to be; rather it is a disguised form of something else. The admittedly symbolic character of religious belief and action makes such an approach both attractive and to some degree inevitable; but it is just this symbolic character, luring us as it does into making over facile interpretations, which presents the greatest difficulties in arriving at a really satisfactory theory of religious behavior. Let us consider still a further theory of religion, one which is perhaps most fashionable today. At the same time that this theory takes us deeper into the problem of what religion really is, it will illustrate to us the pitfalls involved in the interpretation of religious symbolism.

The theory to which I refer is the psychoanalytic interpretation of religion. Rather than attempt to paraphrase I will quote briefly from the classic exposition of this position, Freud's *The Future of an Illusion:*

> Let us imagine to ourselves the mental life of the small child. . . . The libido follows the paths of narcissistic needs, and attaches itself to the objects that ensure their satisfaction. So the mother, who satisfies hunger, becomes the first love-object, and certainly also the first protection against all the undefined and threatening dangers of the outer world; becomes, if we may so express it, the first protection against anxiety.
>
> In this function the mother is soon replaced by the stronger father, and this situation persists from now on over the whole of childhood. But the relation to the father is affected by a peculiar ambivalence. He was himself a danger, perhaps just because of that earlier relation to the mother; so he is feared no less than he is longed for and admired. The indications of this ambivalence are deeply imprinted in all religions . . . Now when the child grows up and finds out that he is destined to remain a child forever, and that he can never do without protection against unknown and mighty powers, he invests these with the traits of the father-figure; he creates for himself the gods, of whom he is afraid, whom he seeks to propitiate, and to whom he nevertheless entrusts the task of protecting him. . . . the child's defensive reaction to his helplessness gives the characteristic features to the adult's reaction to his own sense of helplessness, i.e. the formation of religion.[3]
>
> Thus religion would be the universal obsessional neurosis of humanity. It, like the child's, originated in the Oedipus complex, the relation to the father. Accord-

[3] *The Future of an Illusion,* New York, Anchor Books, 1957, pp. 39-40.

ing to this conception one might prophesy that the abandonment of religion must take place with the fateful inexorability of a process of growth, and that we are just now in the middle of this phase of development.[4]

With this prophecy Freud joins so many other attempts to explain religion by explaining it away. The issue, of course, is still in doubt—it is only thirty years since the prediction was made—but it would be hard today to find so confident an assurance of the early demise of religion. Still it would be a grave mistake to dismiss Freud's contribution. No other single development in the whole area of the social sciences holds out a greater promise for the scientific understanding of religion than psychoanalysis (though we may mention another equally promising line of development in sociology beginning with Weber and Durkheim and continuing at present in the theory of action). Where, then, can we say that Freud's contribution lies and where can we, with some confidence, criticize his final conclusion?

Freud too views religion as concerned with a boundary situation, for instance when he speaks of religion as a protection against anxiety and as a defensive reaction to man's sense of his own helplessness. Here we have not the boundary of man's adaptation to nature, or of his attainment of political goals, or of his social integration, but the boundary of man's motivation which must be held if he is not to be overwhelmed by anxiety. In part it is the boundary of man's unconscious. It is interesting to note that Freud's insistence on considering religion in relation to man's sense of his own helplessness and the problem of anxiety strikes a reverberating note, not only in the two quotations with which we began our discussion above, but also in the thinking of two of the most insightful of the pre-Freudian theologians, namely Schleiermacher and Kierkegaard. These are hints and indications that Freud may have really hit on the "right"boundary. Assuming that this is indeed the religious boundary, we find that Freud has shed a flood of light on our problem by showing that this boundary is especially closely related to the historical development of the personality, to what is called the socialization process. Many sensitive religious people had intuited this connection before, but no one hitherto had given us a theory of personality development which would make this connection appear so rich in implications.

Before going on to consider some of these implications something

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 77-78.

must be said about Freud's claim that he had discovered the illusory character of religion by showing that it was nothing other than the neurotic acting-out of certain unresolved tensions acquired in the family in the process of growing up. Why logically should Freud's approach be considered more fruitful than the first three theories discussed? Does not he too reduce religion to the status of a mere reflection of something else? The answer, for which I hope to present some evidence below, is that the functions of religion actually are closely related to and even to some degree interdependent with those of the family, especially with respect to the socialization process, as contemporary action theory has made clear. This relation between religion and the family is, in this view, closer than the relation between religion and that aspect of the social system which maintains adaptation to nature, or that attains political goals, or that maintains social integration. Therefore the exploration of this connection has proven more fruitful than that of the other previously mentioned connections. Freud's error, however, was to see this as a solely one-way connection. Thus Freud points out the undoubted symbolic connection between the idea of God, and the father image as it takes shape during and after the Oedipal crisis. But why must we assume that the reduction of the religious symbol to a familial symbol exhausts the possibilities of analysis? Is it not equally possible or even likely that the father-figure symbolizes values and powers that transcend the familial sphere? To give a simple example, the father in our society symbolizes for the child not only masculinity but also participation in the occupational world, so that the outcome of the encounter with the father in the Oedipal situation will determine to some extent not only what he thinks of himself as a man, but also what he thinks of himself in the field of productive work. Similarly the father-image can in part stand for and point to certain ultimate values and powers which are the special concern of religion. The symbolic fabric of human culture is a seamless web. Starting from any part one can trace connections to every other part, and it is arbitrary to say that one part is somehow real and all the rest can be explained as illusory reflections of it. Consequently while we accept Freud's insight that religion is closely connected with the problems of socialization in the family we must reject the idea that it can be explained as a merely aberrant and illusory outcome of them.

Having argued at some length that religion is an independently variable aspect of human action I must now proceed to substantiate that statement, and to discuss more fully the characteristics of the specifically religious boundary. Here I will be following the general lines of a theory of action which has incorporated many of the psychoanalytic insights.[5] We have already said that this boundary is concerned with motivation. All human action, of course, involves motivation. In economic or political life many of the problems are concerned with the allocation or manipulation of human motivation. But in these spheres of life the motivation itself is taken for granted. Recent sociological theory suggests, however, that from the point of view of the social system as a whole motivation cannot be taken for granted. There must be a special subsystem of society whose task it is to maintain a relatively stable input of motivation into the other subsystems. It is in this special motivation subsystem that we would locate religious action.

The problem of the motivational subsystem is to maintain motivational commitment to the value patterns which define the system as a whole. There are two possible threats to the maintenance of this motivational commitment, and they determine the special character of the boundary of the motivational subsystem. In the first place the value pattern itself can be threatened. Should the conflicts latent in any value system become too apparent or should certain crucial elements of the value system become for large numbers of people essentially meaningless then the motivational commitment will be threatened. On the other hand even though the value pattern itself remains fairly coherent, if the level of tension within the personalities of the members of the system rises beyond certain levels and can find no form of expression within the norms of the value pattern, then also the motivational commitment to the pattern will be threatened. To make this rather abstract problem concrete let us take a very simple example. We know that in the process of raising a child if the pattern of values and standards of the parents is unclear and contradictory the child will have difficulty in conforming to that pattern. On the other hand even though the parents present a clear and coherent set of values and standards, if these standards make such demands on the

[5] See especially Parsons and Bales, *Family, Socialization and Interaction Process*, Glencoe, 1955.

personality of the child that a great deal of tension is produced and at the same time do not allow any permissible expression of that tension, then also the child's conformity to the pattern will be threatened. As this example indicates we would place family life in the motivational subsystem of society. In this context the family would be viewed as a mechanism for the production of new members of a society who will be imbued with the central values of that society and endowed with techniques for handling the tensions of their personalities. The function of the family for society would be then to help individuals to function with maximal efficiency when they enter upon the various adult roles in their society and make their input of motivation into those roles insofar as possible unproblematic. Even for adults the family may be viewed from the point of view of society as a whole, as a mechanism for sustaining motivation in non-familial roles and for the release of tensions which would be disruptive in other contexts.

Let us consider a little more closely some of the functions of the family viewed in the context of the motivational subsystem. We may view the process of socialization in the family as one in which the child moves through a series of successively more complex and differentiated social structures.[6] The first of these we may call, borrowing a psychoanalytic term, mother-child identity. In this stage the young infant has not yet differentiated self from environment and tends to perceive its own inner needs and tensions and the care it receives from its mother as part of a single undifferentiated system. The second stage consists of a two-unit system arising from the bifurcation of the original single unit. The psychoanalytic term for this two unit system is mother-child love-dependency. In this stage the child has differentiated itself from its environment but has as yet distinguished only one significant other person—the mother. A further stage is reached when the child moves from the two unit system to a four unit system, the basic roles of which are mother, father, sister, and brother—in other words the nuclear family. This transition is termed the Oedipal crisis in psychoanalysis and it is of particular importance because the sex discrimination is made at this time. Membership in school and peer group involve further differentiations until finally in late adolescence another great transition occurs when the child moves conclusively out of his own nuclear family into the extremely complex and highly

[6] *Ibid.*, Chapter II.

differentiated role system of adulthood where he participates in the life of his entire society.

In this process of development through successively more complex social systems as a consequence of which the child's personality itself becomes successively more differentiated and complex, the points of greatest difficulty are apt to be the transitions from one system to the next. Here the problem of motivation becomes acute because the child must be induced to give up old and previously gratifying patterns of behavior for new more complicated patterns with which the child has no gratificatory experiences as yet. A delicate balance of permissiveness and discipline must be maintained if these transitions are to be accomplished smoothly. It is impossible here to go into all the implications of these transitions but one aspect of them requires further consideration because it is related to the subject in hand. This is the apparent necessity that at any transition not merely two but three system levels must be involved. Thus in the transition from mother-child identity to the two unit mother-child love-dependency system the mother must impose a number of frustrating disciplines on a child heretofore unstintingly gratified, most notably weaning and toilet training. It seems essential for a smooth accomplishment of this transition for the mother to be able to legitimize her actions by reference to a still higher system, the nuclear family. Thus her actions are not merely gross negligence in failing to conform to the expectations set up in a previous stage but are legitimized by the fact that she has obligations to other family members, to husband and other children, and cannot indefinitely wait on the young infant hand and foot without jeopardizing those obligations. Similarly at the Oedipal crisis when the child is moving from the two unit mother-child love-dependency system into full participation in family life it is the father who is most active in imposing the appropriate standards. In this case it is the father's participation in the still higher level occupational system which gives him a special leverage in inculcating universalistic standards of fairness, responsibility, etc., which become important at this time. The father represents not only the values of the new system, the nuclear family, but also the transcendent powers and values of the great world beyond that system, of which the child is just becoming aware. The morality of the nuclear family is accepted in part because the parents, especially the father, are seen as controlling knowledge

and power which seem from the child's point of view to be of ultimate magnitude. It is the internalization of such an image of the father which is the focus of the super-ego in the personality.

As Freud has pointed out, by adolescence the child's experience in the world has sadly punctured his image of the ultimate power and knowledge of the parents. The parents, then, do not have the leverage to accomplish the final stage of the socialization process. Here again we have a transition: the child at the nuclear family level about to move into full participation in the social system of the adult world. What is the third level, superordinate to the social system? I would contend that the superordinate religious system provides that level. This, it seems to me, gives a special significance to the very widespread rite of religious initiation at adolescence, in our own recent past the conversion experience which was a normal part of late adolescence in the Protestant sects. This correlates with a broader symbolic restructuring of the super-ego including values and ideals of a wider meaning than the earlier internalized father-image. Of course the symbolic content of the initiation or conversion in late adolescence may include projected images of the father or other familial figures and situations, but it always includes imagery which is supra-familial in reference. Whatever the specific content of the superordinate religious system, it must provide some basis of ultimacy in terms of which the values of the society are legitimized. In this way the new adult roles which the young person is about to enter receive a context of higher meaning.

Here then we seem to have arrived at one of the two great functions which religion fulfills for society, the function of providing a set of symbols which stand above and give meaning to the values institutionalized in society. This is the pattern maintenance or, to use a psychoanalytic term, the superego function of religion. It guards the boundary of the social system by holding the line against meaninglessness at the highest level. Should it fail to hold this line the central values and institutions of the society would be gravely weakened with serious, and in the absence of a successful reconstruction, ultimately fatal consequences for the social system as a whole.

Before looking further into the pattern-maintenance functions of religion let us examine the other main function which religion performs for society. Here again it will be useful to begin by considering some of the functions performed by the nuclear family. In the process

of growing up there are numerous minor crises—such as the arrival of a new sibling, the absence of a parent, the imposition of some new discipline—which require special handling. Let us analyze briefly what happens in these situations. Some unexpected frustration occurs which sharply raises the tension level in the child's personality. The normal response of the child to this kind of situation is regression—the more recently learned behavior patterns are abandoned and the child falls back on more deeply internalized earlier patterns which once ensured great security and gratification. We say that such a child is not acting like a big boy but is behaving childishly, "like a baby." The wise parent adopts a permissive attitude toward this behavior, allowing the child some freedom in expressing his feelings, while at the same time reassuring him that the present frustration is perhaps not as bad as he thinks. But while accepting the child and forgiving his regressive behavior the parent firmly and steadily reasserts the standards of behavior appropriate to a big boy. The parent lends the support of his own love and strength to the child so that he will be able as soon as possible to recover from the crisis and return to his normal course of growing and maturing.

But such frustrations do not end with childhood. They are, if we may anticipate our argument somewhat, inherent in the human situation. What happens when severe frustrations—for example the death of a spouse or failure in business—occur to an adult? Such occurrences create tensions which tend to be too much for the family to handle. Who is to provide for the parent the functions which the parent provides for the child? Again I would contend that it is the religious system whose primary function it is to handle this kind of situation. Let us take the funeral ritual as a type case of the religious handling of such a situation.[7] Here the bereaved person has undergone a severe frustration and his immediate reaction is a regressive one—he ceases to function in his adult roles. It is the function of the religious specialist and of the funeral ritual to keep the regressive behavior under control and to help the bereaved return to his adult responsibilities as smoothly as possible. The funeral situation allows the expression of behavior such as weeping which is not normally expected of adults. While providing an outlet for the feelings of the bereaved the funeral situation also provides him support. The religious specialist provides

[7] These remarks on the funeral ceremony are derived from the analyses of Parsons and Malinowski.

a context of meaning for what has happened so that the loss can be accepted. The religious specialist will allow the bereaved to adopt a more dependent role with respect to him than would be usual, at the same time lending him the support of his own strength and of the strength inherent in the religious symbols which he mediates. While accepting the grief reaction of the bereaved, the religious specialist steadily reasserts the injunction that life must go on, and encourages the early resumption of a normal adult life. The parallel between the religious handling of an adult crisis and the parents' handling of a childhood crisis is, rather striking. It is not surprising then that we find many symbols taken from childhood and the family situation used in religious ritual.

Other specifically frustrating situations may call forth a religious ritual through which they may be handled. Primitive religions are characterized by a great variety of special rituals for various special situations. However even primitive religions recognize implicitly, as the higher religions do explicitly, that the frustrations of the human situation are not fortuitous and isolated but are indeed inherent in its very structure. This state of generalized frustration and anxiety is congruent with what is known religiously as alienation, or more traditionally, evil and sin. The social scientist can recognize the basis of this situation in certain objective facts. It is clear that for biological, psychological and sociological reasons a certain proportion of even the legitimate expectations of mankind must inevitably be frustrated. From what we know of the functioning of social systems it is clear that no society can guarentee that the good will not die young nor the wicked flourish. From what we know of the functioning of the personality it is impossible for any human being to conform at all times in thought and deed with his own internalized values, and if we call the consciousness of this discrepancy "guilt" then guilt is inevitable.

Various religions have dealt with this fundamental fact of alienation in different ways but all have had to face it. We may turn to Mencius, the great 4th century B.C. Chinese Confucian for one particularly poignant expression of it:

> The Bull Mountain was once covered with lovely trees. But it is near the capital of a great state. People came with their axes and choppers; they cut the woods down, and the mountain has lost its beauty. Yet, even so, the day air and the night air came to it, rain and dew moistened it. Here and there fresh sprouts began to grow. But soon cattle and sheep came along and broused on them, and in the end

the mountain became gaunt and bare, as it is now. And seeing it thus gaunt and bare people imagine that it was woodless from the start. Now just as the natural state of the mountain was quite different from what now appears, so too in every man (little though they may be apparent) there assuredly were once feelings of decency and kindness; and if these good feelings are no longer there, it is that they have been tampered with, hewn down with axe and bill. As each day dawns they are assailed anew. What chance then has our nature, any more than that mountain, of keeping its beauty? To us too, as to the mountain, comes the air of day, the air of night. Just at dawn, indeed, we have for a moment and in a certain degree a mood in which our promptings and aversions come near to being such as are proper to men. But something is sure to happen before the morning is over, by which these better feelings are either checked or perhaps utterly destroyed. And in the end, when they have been checked again and again, the night air is no longer able to preserve them, and soon our feelings are as near as may be to those of beasts and birds; so that any one might make the same mistake about us as about the mountain, and think that there was never any good in us from the very start. Yet assuredly our present state of feeling is not what we began with. Truly,

"If rightly tended, no creature but thrives;
If left untended, no creature but pines away." [8]

All religions are concerned with the attempt to solve this generalized problem of alienation ultimately. In our own tradition this is called salvation. It is interesting that in many cases this process is seen as one of return. This is clear in the above quotation from Mencius. It is also true of our own tradition in which original sin is not really original but is preceded by innocence, and in which Christ is seen as a second Adam who comes to cancel out the sin of the first Adam and thus return us to a state of primal innocency. These symbolic usages suggest to us that just as the specifically frustrating experiences which we previously analyzed involved regression, so the solution of the generalized problem of frustration may have an important regressive aspect. It is possible indeed to view the various types of solution to the problem of salvation as involving a symbolic regression to one of the early stages of the socialization process.

Thus we could view certain types of mysticism which seek the dissolution of the distinction between subject and object as a symbolic return to the stage of primary identification before mother and child have been differentiated into two units. Meister Eckhart, the great German mystic, gives us a clue to this type of mysticism when he tells us that:

Back in the Womb from which I came, I had no god and merely was, myself. I did not will or desire anything, for I was pure being, a knower of myself by divine

[8] Trans. by Arthur Waley, *The Way and Its Power*, London, 1934, pp. 18-19.

truth. Then I wanted myself and nothing else. And what I wanted, I was and what I was, I wanted, and thus, I existed untrammeled by god or anything else.[9]

That sense of the brokenness and partiality of our lives and that yearning for reunion with the whole of which we are all but separated parts, which many religious men have felt, symbolizes and is symbolized by the universal experience of separation from identity with the mother.

Similarly a devotional piety which seeks a perfect love relationship with a parent deity without the dissolution of the self may be seen as a symbolic return to the stage of love-dependency, before the mother-child relation was disturbed by any conflicting outside claim. The relation with the mother in the second stage of the socialization process is the child's first object-relationship, his first experience of love and the prototype of all future such experiences. It thus has the closest symbolic connection with the religious expression of love, as is indicated in the words of the German mystic Suso:

> Whence came the habit that every time he heard God's praises sung or said, he recollected himself in the depths of his heart and soul, and thought on that Beloved Object, whence comes all love. It is impossible to tell how often, with eyes filled with tears and open heart, he has embraced his sweet Friend, and pressed Him to a heart overflowing with love. He was like a baby which a mother holds upright on her knees, supporting it with her hands beneath its arms. The baby, by the movements of its little head, and all its little body, tried to get closer and closeer to its dear mother, and shows by its little laughing gestures the gladness in its heart. Thus did the heart of the Servitor ever seek the sweet neighborhood of the Divine Wisdom, and thus he was as it were altogether filled with delight.[10]

Further, salvation by faith alone seems to be a symbolic return to the Oedipal crisis when the child, conscious of its weakness and inability to carry out the injunctions of the father, throws himself on the father's mercy as his only hope. Here in the reduced focus of the nuclear family, the child first learns that terrible commandment to "Be perfect as your father in heaven is perfect," accepts the absoluteness of this claim, and experiences the impossibility of carrying it out. This experience serves as a symbolic prototype for all later claims of righteousness, for the guilt arising from failure to meet those claims and for the absolution that guilt may find.

[9] Raymond B. Blakney, *Meister Eckhart,* New York, 1941, p. 228.
[10] Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism,* New York, 1955, pp. 253-254.

These conjectural relationships,[11] however, even if they should hold up on the basis of further research, still would not prove that the religious quest for salvation is a mere aberration of the socialization process. The word "regression" has with us a bad cannotation. But without regression there is no life. Both sleep and sexuality are fundamentally regressive, and yet they are a normal part of adult life. A great source of power in religious symbolism is that it invokes a return to the source of life, from which men come back with strength renewed. Perhaps this is one of the things Heraclitus meant when he said, "The way up and the way down are the same," or that the *Tao Te Ching* means when it says, "The way that goes ahead often looks as if it went back."

The function of handling frustration both in specific situations and in its generalized form is then the second great function of religion as I see it. In the prosaic language of sociological theory it is the function of tension management and in psychoanalytic terminology we may call it the id function of religion. It guards the boundary of the social system by holding the line against frustration and the intolerable anxiety that it may produce. It is this close connection with the problem of frustration to which we may attribute the deeply ambivalent character of religion itself. Just as an adult seeking to help a disturbed child may actually succeed in making him worse, so certain kinds of religious experience which are intended to provide support to a disturbed person may actually precipitate a psychosis. Similarly a religious system may not be able to handle the intense hostile and destructive impulses which accompany severe anxiety states, and in a situation of mass hysteria may actually be perverted to legitimize murderous and inhuman acts. If it is to fulfill its functions for society religion must be familiar with the lowest depths of human sinfulness and it is inevitable that it sometimes will itself be infected. But the cataclysmic results of the failure to hold the line with respect to tension management are even more dramatic than the consequences of failure in the area of pattern maintenance.

After this necessarily truncated discussion of the functions of reli-

11 Subsequently to the writing of this paper the writer has discovered a somewhat similar analysis in Erwin R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period*, Vol. IV, New York, 1954, the section on "The Problem of Method."

gion for the motivational system of society, we may return to a consideration of the boundary problem of religion with at least a little more enlightenment than when we started. We have seen that religion fulfills the function of pattern maintenance by providing the central values of a society with a context of ultimate meaning. Let us now examine a little further the way in which this is done.

Religion fulfills its function of pattern maintenance by providing a symbolic statement of the meaning of reality in terms of which the ideals and moral norms of the society make sense. In this way every religion implies an ontology or metaphysics. Ontology is not by definition an empirical science since it does not contain statements which can be empirically proven or disproven, but it is open to rational systematization and logical development. When in any religious tradition the ontological implications of that religion become explicit then theology results, and with the emergence of theology the possibility of change through intellectual rationalization arises. That is to say, purely cognitive considerations may give rise to new developments on the religious level. But everything in the foregoing analysis of religion would indicate that there are very definite limits to such a process. Cognitive considerations are always present in religious action, but they do not hold primacy. This helps to explain why changes in the scientific and philosophical world views are not reflected at once in religion, even though in the long run religion must take account of them. But even so religion can never be reduced to science or philosophy. Religion cannot be, like science, a disinterested observer. There is a very real sense in which, taking the long view of history, science is a luxury whereas religion is a necessity. Religion is engaged in a struggle to the death to hold an acutely sensitive boundary of the social system. The failure of a purely cognitive approach is manifest if we consider the fact that religion must give an answer to questions that no scientist in his right mind would even consider answerable, if the canons of scientific rigor are observed. This is the truth with lies behind the positivist's assertion that the questions which religion asks are meaningless and thus so are the answers. But when a woman whose young husband has just been killed in an automobile accident asks why did it happen? no scientist as such can answer her question. The medical report on the causes of death is not what she is asking for.

And yet people commit suicide and societies go into decay if such questions remain unanswered.

Religion must answer these questions, must in the most urgent sense of the word must, and yet no logical operation nor any controlled experiment will yield the answer. Where then is the answer to come from? The answer can only come from people involved in the religious situation, personally struggling with the religious problem—the answer comes from the battle line itself. All that we know *about* religion will not help us to deduce a single religious ansewr. The religious quest for meaning must be lived on the boundary itself, even though the boundary may for the moment be located at the theologian's arm chair. The creative religious person must utilize all his cognitive resources, but they are not enough. He must make life and death commitments for which no cognitive justification can ever be given, and he must answer questions which are in any ordinary sense unanswerable. Living through the boundary situation means giving oneself up to it, responding with one's total personality and with the deepest center of one's being. A person who has lived through that experience and has come back with a renewed commitment to life and a new sense of its meaning and power may be said to have found faith, or if you will, faith may be said to have found him. Such a person cannot tell us in any cognitively rigorous way what has happened to him—he can only point to it with more or less misleading symbols and we can understand him only if we have in some part experienced what he has experienced.

If the religious problem of meaning brings us to the situation of faith it also shows us that the religious problem of frustration is merely another way of stating the same thing. No amount of cognitive explanation can bring relief to the grief-stricken woman of whom we have spoken, nor can it bring salvation to the alienated. A cognitive understanding of one's situation may be of immense help, but it is not enough. The situation must be lived through, the answer must come of itself, or it will not come at all. The very nature of the human situation forces man to seek the meaning behind every transient meaning and the power behind every partial power. But he finds that he can neither define that meaning nor coerce that power, and in his religion he attempts to hold the breach. Sometimes he even demonically be-

lieves that his religion knows the ultimate meaning and controls the ultimate power, but life has never failed to reveal the irony of such pretensions. At the core of every religion is a central symbol which points to the boundary situation and to a way to overcome it. It does not coerce from without, but only when it is met in the experience of the boundary situation itself. If we may take but a single example, Christianity is essentially contained in the symbol of the crucified Christ, which shows us a moment of supreme human anguish and yet makes the unprovable assertion that love is stronger than death.

These then are some of the conclusions to which one social scientist is driven by a consideration of the nature and place of religion in human action. It is evident that there are certain marked differences from a theological approach. The point of view is entirely confined to this side of the boundary, though nothing in this position can be taken to deny that there is reality on the other side of the boundary. Still the theologian will feel uneasy about an analysis of religion which takes its primary points of reference in religion's *functions for* society and personality. Even in spite of this perhaps inevitable difference in point of view it can perhaps be maintained that there is a considerable congruence between certain current theological interpretations of religion and the social scientific analysis presented here.[12] We may hope that on the basis of such apparent convergences fruitful interaction between the two sides may continue.

[12] The present paper has for purposes of convenience been confined largely to the sphere of what is usually called "psychology of religion," but the writer would maintain that from the same theoretical point of view problems of religious symbolism, religious sociology, religious history, etc., can usefully be elucidated.

ISAAC NEWTON: RELIGIOUS RATIONALIST OR MYSTIC?

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PERHAPS THE GREAT AND CREATIVE MIND of a genius must always remain a mystery in some degree to lesser mortals who probe its legacy, but few significant thinkers have rivalled Sir Isaac Newton in consciously guarding the sanctity of their meditations. Self-contained and secretive by nature, Newton shrank from the controversies that he feared would follow publication of his ideas. He concealed even his scientific labors behind a veil of silence and obscurity with apparently no intention of publishing his discoveries until the enthusiasm of Edmund Halley succeeded in extracting them and spreading them before the world. While Newton valued his religious studies at least as highly as his scientific work, no eager friend pried these ruminations from the sphinx; and two centuries have been necessary to make public what would now appear to be all of the evidence concerning his religious opinions. As information about his religious beliefs has come to light, two contradictory schools of interpretation have appeared. Some of the evidence has seemed to reveal Newton as a religious rationalist, almost a deist; other evidence has led some scholars to conclude that he was a mystic.

While Newton was still alive, rumors causing him some displeasure, that he did not believe in the Trinity, spread abroad. Hopton Haynes, a clerk at the mint, and William Whiston, themselves both anti-Trinitarians, asserted as much; but Haynes being little known and Whiston being in disrepute, their story was not widely accepted. In 1754 a mutilated version of Newton's treatise, *An Historical Account of Two Notable Corruptions of Scripture,* was published. It argued that two passages in the Scriptures, I John v. 7, and Timothy iii, 16, on which Trinitarians were wont to rely, were spurious additions of the fourth and sixth centuries. When Bishop Horsley published an edition of Newton's works later in the eighteenth century, he felt obliged to print an authentic version of the Scriptural criticism from Newton's papers, to which he had access. The good Bishop, his orthodox soul shocked by this indication of heresy among the great, con-

trived to give the treatise the air of a simple exercise in textual criticism. Since he had examined the whole corpus of Newton's manuscripts, he could not have been ignorant that Newton's intent had surpassed mere criticism. As for the other papers, Bishop Horsley judged them to be too heady fare for the general public to feed on. When the papers were next surveyed nearly a century later by Sir David Brewster, a few more were brought to light. As Brewster's preface acknowledged, he approached this aspect of Newton's thought with a heavy heart, a Victorian heart, it might be said, which boggled apparently at the full extent of his hero's heterodoxy. Although he published some compromising papers, he did not publish the most compromising papers; and it remained for the godless twentieth century through the instrument of L. T. More's life of Newton to publish the full facts. More founded his *Newton,* which came out in 1934, upon a thorough study of the Newton manuscripts. Although lack of space prevented him from printing all of the religious papers, he published enough new ones to establish beyond doubt that Newton was an anti-Trinitarian. When the manuscripts were sold at auction in 1936, a sizable body of them went to Kings College, Cambridge; from these Herbert McLachlan selected the documents which make up a volume of Newton's theological manuscripts, published in 1950. While it altered none of the features in the portrait that More had painted, McLachlan's volume filled in details and presented the positive side of Newton's rational religion where More had dealt mainly with the negative, or anti-Trinitarian, aspect.

Meanwhile another stream of discovery flowed down through the years. Newton stood revealed also as a mystic. Evidently the theory was first stated by William Law in 1740. Himself a mystic and an eager student of Jacob Boehme, Law maintained that Newton's *Principia* was nothing more than Boehme's first three principles of eternal nature tricked out in mathematical dress. Newton, he had it on good authority, was a devoted student of Boehme, used him as a guide in alchemical work, even copied out long extracts from the German theosophist.[1] Law's words were repeated often enough that it became con-

[1] William Law, "Some Animadversions upon Dr. Trap's Late Reply," an appendix published with *An Appeal to All That Doubt, or Disbelieve the Truths of the Gospel* (2nd ed. London, 1756), p. 314. The first edition appeared in 1740. Also a letter of 1742 to Dr. George Cheyne, printed in *Gentleman's Magazine, 52* (1782), 329.

ventional to refer to Boehme's influence on Newton, mentioning the long extracts that Newton copied down, and clinching the matter with the undoubted evidence of his alchemical interests. While some scholars have recognized the genuinely mystical element in alchemy, scientists who have written on Newton have often seemed to be embarrassed by his interest in alchemy. They have tended to thrust his alchemy hurriedly into the category of mysticism, and bowing their heads momentarily in reverent if uncomprehending silence, have passed on to weightier matters. In addition to Newton's study of Boehme and of alchemy a third substantial fact could be cited, his *Observations upon the Prophecies.* Again, a subject as far removed from science as an interpretation of the Prophecies could be catalogued under mysticism. In discussing Newton's mysticism, most scientists, being familiar with the background of Newton's scientific work, have ignored the precise intent of Law's original statement, that Newton derived his scientific discoveries from Boehme. They have cited the theosophist's influence in general terms. Students of religion and of mysticism, on the other hand, have continued to uphold Law's actual statement. A German scholar, K. R. Popp, undertook to substantiate Law's statement in a book published in 1935, *Jacob Boehme und Isaac Newton.* Popp argued first that Boehme's principles bear some resemblance to Newton's concepts, and second that Newton could have read Boehme by the time he evolved them. From this he concluded that William Law was correct in stating that Newton developed his scientific discoveries from the principles of Jacob Boehme.

Stephen Hobhouse made the story of Boehme's influence on Newton the subject of an essay in historical criticism printed originally in 1937 in Jugoslavia and republished as an appendix to his selections from William Law.[2] Demonstrating that all reports of the German's influence on Newton can be traced back to the statement of Law, he pointed out how insubstantial the story is. Law based his assertions on a conversation with some unnamed informant whom Hobhouse assumed to be a friend of Humphrey Newton, who had served as Isaac Newton's amanuensis from 1685 to 1690. A distant relative of Isaac, Humphrey Newton was also a resident of Grantham, which is not far

2 Stephen Hobhouse, "Isaac Newton and Jacob Boehme," *Philosophia* (Belgrade, Jugoslavia), *2* (1937), 25-54. Hobhouse's article is more easily accessible in the fourth appendix of his volume, *Selected Mystical Writings of William Law,* London, 1948.

from Law's home. He appears to have been the most reliable source that Law could have tapped. Hobhouse surmised that Law picked up the story about 1728 when Humphrey returned to Grantham, some forty years after he had left Isaac Newton's employment. Hobhouse illustrated how Humphrey's recollections of Newton, written at this time for John Conduitt, the husband of Newton's niece, were full of the inaccuracies that forty years might breed, and concluded that his testimony about Newton's studying Boehme must be suspect at best. As for the extracts which Newton supposedly copied out, their only existence seemingly was in the mind of Law; no one has ever been able to find them.[3] To discredit the notion that Newton's scientific conclusions derived from Boehme Hobhouse compared the theosophist's principles of eternal nature with Newton's system of the universe. The comparison is difficult since Boehme's principles are more descriptions of psychological states than mechanical laws. Nevertheless Hobhouse was able to demonstrate effectively that despite vague similarities the differences are too great to support the argument that Newton copied from Boehme. Finally Hobhouse observed what was too often ignored by those who argued for Boehme's influence, that Newton's system found its undoubted source in the scientific work of Galileo and others, with whose discoveries Newton was of course, by his own acknowledgment, conversant. The last argument can hardly be emphasized too strongly. Other scientists of Newton's age, Hooke, Wren, and Halley, for example, deduced the basic elements of the concept of universal gravitation from earlier scientific discoveries. Newton differed from them, not so much in his conception of the system of the universe, as in his ability to substantiate his theory by mathematical proof. In my opinion Hobhouse's criticism is conclusive. Since the publication of his article new evidence must be produced before the idea that Boehme influenced Newton can be used again. It is of interest that L. T. More, who repeated the story in his life of New-

[3] Of course, it is impossible to say definitely that these papers do not exist, but it can be said that they have not been located. They are not to be found in the largest collection of Newton's religious manuscripts, those at Kings College, nor is there mention of them either in the catalogue of the Portsmouth Papers (*i.e.*, Newton's papers) drawn up by Cambridge University in 1888 or in the detailed and extensive catalogue published for the sale in 1936. Moreover, neither Boehme's works nor books about him are listed in the catalogue of Newton's library which was found and published in 1931. The burden of proof rests upon those who cite the extracts; so far no one has given their location.

ton, found himself unable to support it when challenged and authorized Stephen Hobhouse to state that he had discarded the opinion.[4]

More recently than Popp, however, the interpretation of Newton as a mystic has been advanced upon different grounds. A posthumous article by Lord Keynes, based largely on his reading of the alchemical manuscripts that he acquired for Kings College at the sale of Newton's papers, appeared in 1947. Denying that Newton was an experimental philosopher, Keynes insists that he was a magician. "Why do I call him a magician?" he asks. "Because he looked on the whole universe and all that is in it as a *riddle,* as a secret which could be read by applying pure thought to certain evidence, certain mystic clues which God had laid about the world to allow a sort of philosopher's treasure hunt to the esoteric brotherhood." [5] In 1950 the interpretation of Newton as a mystic received its most reasoned statement in the final chapter of Professor Andrade's *Isaac Newton.*[6]

Let us examine Professor Andrade's evidence. Among other things he mentions the influence of Boehme, not his influence upon Newton's scientific work but his influence upon Newton's religious thought. Since Professor Andrade does not adduce any new evidence to support the contention that Boehme influenced Newton, Hobhouse's criticism can be applied to this part of his argument. In addition to the story of Boehme's influence, however, Professor Andrade produces passages from Newton's writings which seem to show a mystical frame of mind. Mentioning Newton's interest in alchemy, Professor Andrade cites a passage from what he chooses to call "Newton's private writings on the transmutation of metals." " 'Because the way by which mercury may be so impregnated, has been thought fit to be concealed by others that have known it,' " Newton wrote, " 'and therefore may possibly be an inlet to something more noble, not to be

[4] Louis T. More, *Isaac Newton, a Biography* (New York, 1934), pp. 158-9; Hobhouse, "Newton and Boehme," p. 25fn.

[5] Lord Keynes, "Newton, the Man," *Newton Tercentenary Celebrations,* published by the Royal Society (Cambridge, 1947), p. 29.

[6] E. N. da C. Andrade, *Isaac Newton* (New York, 1950), pp. 102-11. In his more recent book, *Sir Isaac Newton,* London, 1954, Professor Andrade does not repeat the extreme position taken in the earlier work although he still speaks of mysticism in connection with Newton. In this paper I criticize his earlier argument as the most thorough statement supporting the claim that Newton was a mystic that I have seen in print. I am not criticizing Professor Andrade who has apparently abandoned the position.

communicated without immense danger to the world, if there should be any verity in the Hermetic writers.' " [*sic*] "Many may find it hard to suppose," Professor Andrade continues, "that Newton had some inkling of the tremendous energy released by atomic transmutations, and of its possibilities for evil, but I find it harder still to find any other meaning for the words quoted, especially if they are taken in conjunction with other passages." After citing the supposed influence of Boehme and other mystics on Newton, which has already been mentioned, he concludes that Newton had a direct apprehension of scientific truth. "Strange passages occur in his letter," Professor Andrade adds, "such as 'but it is plain to me by the fountain that I draw it from, though I will not undertake to prove it to others.' " From these passages, which he implies are typical of the whole of Newton's correspondence and private papers, Professor Andrade draws the conclusion that Newton was not only a student of mysticism but actually derived scientific knowledge from his communion with the Absolute.

Professor Andrade's first passage brings up the question of alchemy and its place in Newton's thought. Since Newton's interest in alchemy forms the basis of Lord Keynes's argument, and since it is cited by every author who interprets Newton as a mystic, the question of Newton and alchemy must be considered before the specific quotation is discussed. A serious logical hiatus appears when the argument is examined. A breath-taking leap covers the interval from the undoubted fact that Newton copied and collected alchemical manuscripts to the conclusion that he was a mystic. At least two fundamental queries must be answered affirmatively before the conclusion can be accepted. First, granted that Newton collected alchemical manuscripts, was he an alchemist in the true sense of the word? Second, if he was an alchemist, does that fact necessarily make him a mystic also?

Newton explicitly stated his belief in the transmutation of metals. If by "alchemist" we mean a man who believes in the transmutation of metals, Newton was certainly an alchemist, but by the same token all modern physicists are equally alchemists. "Alchemy" historically meant a great deal more than the mere belief in transmutation. It involved a whole philosophy of nature in terms of which transmutation was justified. The alchemical philosophy of nature, with minor variations for individuals, informs the manuscripts that Newton collected, but the fact that he collected them does not justify the conclusion

that he accepted the philosophy. Indeed, all evidence points to the conclusion that he did not accept the philosophy, points to the conclusion, in other words, that he was not an alchemist in any strict sense of the word. Newton's chemical work is not shrouded in mystery. The notes of his experiments have survived. He recorded his provisional conclusions in an essay *De Natura Acidorum* and in the queries appended to the *Optics*. The spirit and purpose behind his chemical notes and writings are utterly different from those of alchemy. In spirit, he sought to proceed by hypothesis and experimentation, not by reference to past authority. In purpose, he sought to comprehend the force that he supposed must exist to bind fundamental particles of matter together; he did not try to make gold by perfecting inferior metals. The scholar best qualified to judge Newton's chemical work, Douglas McKie, absolutely rejects the theory that he was an alchemist. "Until we know what Newton's own opinion was about the material that he copied out from alchemical works, we have no warrant, however extensive that material may be and however uniform its content, for concluding that it reflected his own views on chemistry, especially when the chemical thought set forth in his published writings shows an advance towards modern chemistry rather than a reversion to the already discredited pursuit of gold-making." [7] R. J. Forbes, who has also considered the question, reaches substantially the same conclusion. Newton, he decides, was an alchemist, an alchemist, that is, "of the same sort as Boyle," which means that he was not an alchemist at all in the historical meaning of the term.[8]

Alchemy understood nature in terms of life. It founded its conception of nature upon the supposition that organic processes are typical of all natural phenomena. Instead of trying to "make" gold, alchemists really tried to "grow" it. However much Newton's chemical interests may be open to speculation, one thing is certain: he did not accept the alchemical conception of nature. From his earliest scientific work until his last publication Newton accepted the mechanical idea of nature elaborated by earlier French and English thinkers. What seem to be vestiges of alchemical influence do appear in his writings.

[7] Douglas McKie, "Some Notes on Newton's Chemical Philosophy Written upon the Occasion of the Tercentenary of His Birth," *The London, Edinburgh & Dublin Philosophical Magazine and Journal of Science, ser. 7, vol. 33* (1942), 867.

[8] R. J. Forbes, "Was Newton an Alchemist?" *Chymia, 2* (1949), 27-36.

The terms "ferment" and "putrify" from the alchemical vocabulary are used frequently, and most notably in the discussion of transmutation in *De Natura Acidorum*. Newton's speculations about the ether suggest the alchemical theory of a universal first matter. In all cases Newton embedded ideas that alchemy may have suggested to him in a matrix of atomic, mechanical philosophy. If, because of the possible influence of alchemy on him, and particularly because of his belief in the possibility of transmuting metals, he is called an alchemist, the name "alchemist" must be stretched to include far more than its historical meaning. That is largely a matter of semantics and of no great importance so long as the usage of terms is clearly set down. For the question of mysticism, however, the fact that Newton accepted a conception of nature totally different from that of alchemy is all important. The possibility of finding mystical symbolism in alchemy rested on the analogy between alchemical processes and life. Place the belief in transmutation in the framework of a mechanical philosophy of nature and the mystical symbolism suffocates.

The second question about Newton's interest in alchemy that must be considered is already partially answered. If he was an alchemist—and we have seen the limited sense in which it can be said that he was—was he therefore also a mystic? Not all alchemists, in the true meaning of the term, were mystics; to equate alchemy and mysticism is to oversimplify grossly. Those who were mystics were not much interested in the physical operations of alchemy. Newton, on the other hand, has left definite proof that he was concerned with physical chemical operations. Of course it is not impossible that he found some symbolism in them, but we have already seen how he rejected the philosophy of nature on which the relation of mysticism and alchemy ultimately depended. Finally, one last fact of overwhelming importance must be added. Newton's religious opinions are not unknown any longer. Had the mysticism of alchemy attracted him, surely it would have been reflected in his religious writings. Mysticism is not a secretive pursuit. More than a private study it is a way of life, a way of life which pervades the whole being of those who are mystics. Yet the religious writings that Newton left behind do not reveal the least trace of mysticism.

Let us return to Professor Andrade's quotation from Newton, the passage in which he warns against the publication of information that

could be of great danger to society. The "private writing on the transmutation of metals" (the term is Professor Andrade's) from which it comes is a letter of 26 August 1676 to Henry Oldenburg, Secretary of the Royal Society, sent in response to an article in the *Philosophical Transactions*. Number 122, for 21 February 1675/6, of the *Transactions* had carried a short discourse by Boyle in which he spoke of a philosophical mercury, the formula for which he had. Boyle hoped that the mercury would "multiply" gold. Thinking that it might be useful in both medicine and alchemy, but doubting the consequences that might follow its publication, Boyle (under the pseudonym "B. R.") asked for the advice of other philosophers. Boyle himself feared the danger of inundating a society of greedy men in a flood of gold. Newton responded to Boyle's request for advice. He began by doubting the excellency of such a mercury. "Yet because the way, by which mercury may be so impregnated, has been thought fit to be concealed by others that have known it, and therefore may possibly be an inlet to something more noble, not to be communicated without immense damage to the world, if there should be any verity in the Hermetic writers, therefore I question not but that the great wisdom of the noble author will sway him to high silence till he shall be resolved of what consequence the thing may be. . . ." [9] There are no references to the occult in the letter. Professor Andrade's conclusion is startling to say the least. He suggests that Newton had "some inkling of the tremendous energy released by atomic transmutations, and of its possibilities for evil . . ."; that he had "some more direct inspiration and touch with the unknown than is given to most great men." Whatever the bizarre implications of Professor Andrade's conclusion, it rests upon a forced interpretation of Newton's letter.

In Professor Andrade's second quotation Newton wrote that "it is plain to me by the fountain that I draw it from, though I will not undertake to prove it to others." Newton's quarrel with Robert Hooke and the controversies into which he was plunged by the paper on colors that he communicated to the Royal Society in 1672 help to explain the meaning of Professor Andrade's passage. Shocked and hurt by the opposition that the paper aroused, puzzled that people could not understand his conclusive proofs, and indignant that anyone

[9] Stephen Peter Rigaud, ed., *Correspondence of Scientific Men of the Seventeenth Century* (2 vols. Oxford, 1841), *2*, 395-7.

should challenge his work although he was in fact still unknown, Newton immediately announced that he would not again expose himself to such abuse. He was retiring from philosophical studies; philosophy was "an impertinently litigious lady" who would absorb all of his time if he gave her a chance.[10] Meanwhile in 1672 Newton had informed John Collins, a human entrepot in the circulation of mathematical learning, that he had invented a new method of calculation, what he later called the method of fluxions and we know today as the calculus; but he had not revealed what the method was. When Collins learned in 1676 that Leibniz had also discovered a new method, he wrote to Newton urging that he publish before Leibniz won the credit, and expressing concern that Leibniz's method was more general. In his reply of 8 November 1676 Newton first explained that the controversies occasioned by a former paper had determined him not to publish any more. He then expressed confidence that no method was broader than his, listing with pardonable pride the problems that the fluxional calculus could solve. There was no curved line expressed by any equation of three terms of which he could not, within less than fifteen minutes, tell whether it could be squared, or what the simplest figures were with which it could be compared. "This may seem a bold assertion," he concluded, "because it is hard to say a figure may or may not be squared or compared with another, but it is plain to me by the fountain I draw it from, though I will not undertake to prove it to others." [11] Unless the fluxional calculus be considered an embodiment of the Absolute, there are not any overtones of mysticism in the letter—or in any letter that Newton wrote.[12]

[10] Newton to Halley, 20 June 1686; *General Dictionary,* article on Newton. While the phrase comes from a later letter and a later quarrel, it summarizes Newton's disgust with all of the disputes in which he found himself.

[11] Rigaud, *Correspondence, 2,* 404.

[12] Professor Andrade introduces one of his quotations as "an extraordinary passage from Newton's private writings on the transmutation of metals," although it comes from a letter that has been printed; and he says that the meaning of its words is clear "if they are taken in conjunction with other passages." His second example of Newton's mystical expressions is prefaced with the remark, "Strange passages occur in his letters, such as . . . ." He thus leaves the impression of a body of secretive papers filled with occult musings and of letters invoking mystical communions. It would be hypocritical to affect surprise and shock at the use of a gambit that has served almost everyone on occasion to heighten the effectiveness of an argument, but in criticizing Professor Andrade's argument it is necessary to say that the impression he creates is false. No private papers written by Newton on the

Although Professor Andrade does not mention Newton's *Observations upon the Prophecies,* a word should be said about a work often cited in evidence of his mysticism. Apparently those who use the *Observations* as evidence of mysticism feel that some aspect of the "enthusiasm" rife in the seventeenth century must have been responsible for Newton's interpretation of the Prophecies. Newton, however, did not approach the writings of the prophets as a man to whom special insight had been granted. "The folly of interpreters," he wrote, "has been to foretell times and things by this Prophecy, as if God designed to make them prophets. . . . The design of God was much otherwise. He gave this [*i.e.,* the Apocalypse] and the Prophecies of the Old Testament, not to gratify men's curiosities by enabling them to foreknow things, but that after they were fulfilled they might be interpreted by the event, and His own providence, not the interpreters, be then manifested thereby to the world." [13] Following the spirit of his introduction, Newton set up a key to the symbolism in the Prophecies, used it to translate them, and compared their meaning with the facts of history—to the vindication of the prophets of course. He devoted almost all of his space to the ancient world; in a few cases he moved forward to the eighth century (when the Papacy acquired its temporal domain at the expense of the Exarchate of Ravenna, the Duchy of Rome, and the Kingdom of Lombardy, or in terms possibly less familiar to the twentieth century, when the eleventh horn of the fourth beast rooted out three of the first ten horns). Once he found a passage referring to the fall of Constantinople in 1453, but he did not attempt

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transmutation of metals are known. He copied many alchemical manuscripts, if alchemical writings are what Professor Andrade means to suggest, but evidently he composed none himself. The large number of letters in his published correspondence and those manuscript letters which are readily available are not filled with mystical phrases. I have been able to find only one other passage the meaning of which could possibly be construed in Professor Andrade's sense. In a letter to Oldenburgh in 1676, an angry reply to Hooke's charge that Newton had stolen the theory of colors from his book, a phrase similar to the one quoted by Professor Andrade appears. In denying that he had learned anything from Hooke, Newton said of one general conception in optics that it "is to be had from a higher fountain." (*Ibid., 2,* 382.) However, the letter goes on to make it clear that the "higher fountain" was only the men who came before Hooke. It is difficult to believe that anyone on reading through Newton's correspondence could think that it was written by a mystic.

[13] Isaac Newton, *Observations upon the Prophecies of Daniel, and the Apocalypse of St. John* (London, 1733), p. 251.

to interpret his own age through the Prophecies. While it is free from any suggestion of inspired insight, the *Observations* is likewise devoid of any chiliastic tendencies. Newton did not predict the millenium. In a word, the *Observations upon the Prophecies* was not an exercise in mysticism. Closely correlated to the religious purpose of Newton's scientific work, the book testified with his science to the power and omnipotence of God.

None of the evidence cited to prove that Newton was a mystic can stand analysis. What is even more remarkable about the case, the various bits of evidence, taken together, do not form a consistent picture, and above all do not describe a mystic. Boehme, it is true, was a mystic; could his influence on Newton be substantiated, it might, though it would not necessarily, indicate that Newton was also a mystic. The alchemical tradition also contained a strain of mysticism. However, to most of those who cite Newton's interest in alchemy as evidence of mysticism, "mystical" apparently means "mysterious," "esoteric," or "unscientific." In the same way More calls Newton's interpretation of the Prophecies "mystical," and again he apparently means "mysterious" or "esoteric." The fact that interpretations of the Prophecies were often associated with enthusiasm in the seventeenth century seems to lend some credence to the idea that such studies were mystical pursuits. Not only did Newton shun enthusiasm, however, but the enthusiast's belief in an inner light or immediate revelation was at best a low form, and often a diseased parody, of the mystic's contemplation of God. To these inconsistent bits of "evidence" Professor Andrade adds the strangest element of all, the suggestion that Newton's scientific discoveries came from some direct contact with the Absolute. Apparently he means that Newton heard "voices" or saw "visions" dispensing, not spiritual wisdom, but knowledge belonging to natural science—a long step indeed from mystical contemplation. What emerges when all of the evidence is put together is less the portrait than the caricature of a mystic.

Much of the confusion about Newton and mysticism has arisen from the fact that the words "mysticism," "mystical," and "mystic" have been used entirely too loosely. Mysticism cannot be equated with esoterism, occultism, and enthusiasm. While scholars differ in their definitions of mysticism, perhaps the brief one offered by Cuthbert

Butler can serve as a reasonable criterion by which to judge the evidence cited in Newton's case. Mysticism, Butler writes, is "the secret knowledge or perception of God in contemplation." [14] Evelyn Underhill arrives at nearly the same definition; mysticism, according to her, is "the science of ultimates, the science of union with the Absolute, and nothing else. . . ." The mystic, she continues, "is the person who attains to this union, not the person who talks about it." [15] Even if the various bits of evidence employed to argue that Newton was a mystic could be substantiated, most of them would be irrelevant if "mystic" were used in a precise sense.

Mystics themselves distinguish between contemplation and meditation. In contemplation, a specifically mystical exercise, the soul experiences God directly in an immediate perception that does not proceed by way of the senses and does not employ the images formed by sense perceptions. Meditation, on the other hand, consists in discursive reasoning which can only proceed by using the images of sense perceptions. Newton's papers give no hint that he was ever a contemplative man in the sense of this distinction. That he was a meditative man is their constant testimony. Pious and earnestly concerned with religious questions, he sought their solution exclusively through discursive reasoning. Indeed, Newton's writings leave the impression that religious questions were for him far more intellectual and semantic than spiritual and devotional. With his effort directed toward setting Christianity upon a plane of rational certainty, he tried to demonstrate the existence of God and the reasonableness of Christian doctrines. In so doing he missed entirely the mystic's direct experience of God.

Writing at the end of the seventeenth century, Newton fell heir to a traditional concern with natural religion that flourished among the earlier leaders of the scientific movement in England. The publication of Hobbe's writings had raised the possibility that mechanical philosophy might conclude in atheism; the English scientists, led by men such as Robert Boyle and John Ray, had taken up the challenge, seeking to demonstrate that natural science with its mechanical philosophy in reality offered conclusive proof of the fundamental truths of Christianity. When Newton declared that the main business of natu-

[14] Dom. Cuthbert Butler, *Western Mysticism* (2nd ed. London, 1927), p. lxxxv.
[15] Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism* (12th ed. New York, 1930), p. 72.

ral philosophy is not to unfold the mechanism of the world but to reveal the First Cause, "and on this account is to be highly valued," he was following the example set by Boyle and Ray.[16] As they had conceived of it, natural religion was the rationally demonstrated foundation upon which the revealed superstructure of Christianity rested securely. John Locke had gone a step beyond Boyle and Ray; in his *Reasonableness of Christianity* he had demanded in effect, not only that the foundation of Christianity be rationally demonstrable, but also that Christianity as a whole contain no doctrine incomprehensible to reason. Newton followed Locke instead of Boyle, shrinking the superstructure of Christianity into the foundation and embracing natural religion as the whole of Christianity.

A treatise entitled *Irenicum,* of which nearly ten different manuscript versions have survived, gives the clearest expression of Newton's natural religion. The title, *Irenicum,* with its implication that Newton intended it as a formula on which to establish peace among different denominations, is a misleading guide to the contents of the treatise. Undoubtedly Newton did intend it partly as a platform for peaceful understanding, but the real interest of the treatise lies in the nature of the platform that he proposed. Most Christian denominations would have hesitated to accept a statement of faith that equated Christianity with natural religion. The original and pure religion, Newton maintained, was the moral religion which was plain to all men, love of God and love of neighbor. The natural product of human reason, it prevailed during the world's youth. Since mankind continually polluted it through the ages with new and excess articles of belief, God was obliged to send new prophets to revive and restore the original worship. Noah was one such prophet, Moses another, Jesus Christ the last. Jesus added nothing to the true religion except the belief that He arose from the dead and that because of His obedience He can prevail upon God to forgive sinners; primarily He came to confirm and to restore the primitive religion. What is the basic creed of Christianity?—to love God with all your heart and to love your neighbor as yourself. Christianity does not differ from the natural religion known to all rational men. Those who would add articles of belief—and here Newton reached the point of his argument—are corrupters of the pure religion, schismatics dividing the body of the

[16] Isaac Newton, *Optics* (3rd ed. London, 1721), p. 345.

faithful.[17] In discussing the fundamental law of love in a second manuscript treatise, *A Short Scheme of the True Religion,* Newton declared that "there is but one law for all nations, the law of righteousness and charity dictated to the Christians by Christ, to the Jews by Moses, and to all mankind by the light of reason, and by this law all men are to be judged at the last day." [18] In effect Newton dispensed with revelation, radically redefined the concepts of atonement and redemption, and in sum rejected everything that distinguishes Christianity from natural religion.

The dominant theme of Newton's religious writings is the attempt to reconcile Christianity with reason. His ultimate conclusion was to discard every doctrine that transcends reason. Since Newton's concept of reason followed John Locke's, he set himself in opposition to the accepted orthodoxy of his day. "*Homoousion* is unintelligible," he declared. " 'Twas not understood in the Council of Nice [*sic*] . . . nor ever since. What cannot be understood is no object of belief." [19] Thus Newton rejected the divinity of Christ and the doctrine of the Trinity. The end product of his religious thinking was a position hardly distinguishable from what is called deism. A religion that dispensed with divine revelation and doctrines above reason, its two main tenets were belief in God and the acceptance of a rational and reasonable moral code. Nevertheless, Newton considered himself to be a Christian. Instead of forthright repudiation of orthodox Christian beliefs, his papers—private papers, incidentally, not intended for publication and therefore not distorted by fear of censure—retain an appearance of orthodoxy by using traditional words and phrases. It is only a facade, however, for the definitions that he assigned to terms destroyed their original meaning. Newton could refer to Christ as "God" and declare that He redeemed man with His blood. He argued that usage in the Old Testament applied the name "God" to men who received the word of God directly. Since the titles given to Jesus—such as Mes-

[17] The drafts of *Irenicum* are collected in Kings College, *Keynes MSS.* 3; they are cited by permission of the Provost and Fellows of King's College, Cambridge. Four are printed in Isaac Newton, *Theological Manuscripts,* ed. Herbert McLachlan, Liverpool, 1950; one is printed in Sir David Brewster, *Memoirs of the Life, Writings, and Discoveries of Sir Isaac Newton* (2 vols. Edinburgh, 1855), *2,* 526-31.

[18] Kings College, *Keynes MSS.* 7; printed, with minor errors, in Newton, *Theological Manuscripts,* p. 52.

[19] Cited in More, *Newton,* p. 642.

siah, Lamb of God, Son of God, and Son of Man—were derived from the Old Testament, they must be interpreted according to the Old Testament's usage. His conclusion was that Jesus may be referred to as "God," though to worship Him as God would be blasphemy. Newton also applied the name "Redeemer" to Christ, but his understanding of redemption, borrowed directly from John Locke, was artificial and hollow and devoid of the term's accepted content. The word was there but not the orthodox doctrine. These two examples epitomize Newton's approach to religion as a whole. To him religion was an intellectual pursuit, concerned largely with theological formulae and verbal definitions. Newton's intellectualism presents almost the exact antithesis of the mystic's concern with direct experience of God to the exclusion of theological formulae. From the multiple revisions of the treatise *Irenicum* emerges the picture of a man absorbed in the formulation of doctrines and definitions, writing, rewriting, and rewriting again, seeking the exact statement that would reconcile Christianity with reason finally and completely, as though the essence of religion dwelt in words and concepts. More than ordinary imagination is required to find in that picture the image of a mystic contemplating God.

Now that Newton's religious papers are available for study, the conditions for argument about his beliefs have changed. Unconfirmed stories about Boehme's influence and conjectures about the meaning of his interest in alchemy cannot demand equal consideration with the evidence from his own writings. Opinions may differ about the content of his papers, but at least the differing opinions must be based upon those papers. So far no one has ventured to interpret them as the writings of a mystic. To me the papers reveal a man absorbed in the foremost intellectual problem facing Christianity in Newton's day: could a man who believed in both the method and the conclusions of modern natural science continue to be a Christian? Although Newton separated himself from the orthodoxy of his day in answering the question, the answer that he gave was studiously constructed and sincerely set forth. In his papers the historian of religious thought can find evidence concerning the problems and the opinions of thoughtful Christians in the late seventeenth century. Of the mystic's quest for "the secret knowledge or perception of God in contemplation," however, the papers reveal nothing.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Upanishads: Volume III. Translated by Swami Nikhilananda. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956. xv, 392 pp. $6.00.

While it is impossible to determine the dates when the Upanishads were composed, there are good grounds for supposing them to be more ancient than either the Dialogues of Plato or the Tao Teh Ching of Laotzu. If so, they are the oldest strictly philosophical work now extant. It may also be said that in the Indian tradition, just as in the Western and Far Eastern traditions, the oldest extant philosophical work has seldom if ever been surpassed either for profundity of philosophical insight or for elegance of literary style. The Upanishads have a high place in world literature for historical, philosophical, and poetical interest.

Swami Nikhilananda of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center at New York, a distinguished scholar best known for his English version of *The Gospel of Śri Rāmakrishna,* is publishing the eleven principal Upanishads in four volumes. Volume I, published in 1949, included the *Katha, Iśa, Kena,* and *Mundaka,* and Volume II, 1952, the *Śvetāśvatara, Praśna,* and *Māndukya.* Volume III includes the *Aitareya,* a short Upanishad of 33 verses, and *Brihadāranyaka,* the longest and in the swami's opinion most profound of the Upanishads. Volume IV will complete the work with the *Taittiriya* and *Chhāndogya.*

Each Upanishad has an introduction, English translation, and commentary. The translations are in clear and forceful English, and are complete, including some *Brihadāranyaka* verses omitted as improper by the Victorian Max Müller. The commentary, in the form of explanatory notes following each paragraph, makes up the principal bulk of the book, and is based on the classical commentary by Śankara. "In my explanation of the text," says the swami, "I have tried to give most of the relevant and important philosophical ideas from Śankarāchārya's commentary, omitting only those dealing with rituals or the refutation of other schools of thought" (p. vi). Even so, the notes are quite full: *bodies with four feet* is explained as meaning "animals" (p. 193); *oldest and greatest* has the note, "These are the attributes of

priority in age and greatness" (p. 347). The swami follows Śankara's interpretation because, as he says, "Only in the light of non-dualism, which has directly or indirectly influenced all the other systems, can one discover in the Vedic literature an inner harmony between apparently different thought currents and perceive the development of a single line of thought culminating in the realization of the identity of Ātman and Brahman" (p.v). This choice of guide is certainly to be approved. There are different schools of Vedānta, philosophy based on the Upanishads, because the Upanishads as they stand lend themselves to different interpretations, but the non-dualist interpretation, of which Śankara is the most famous expositor, appeals especially to the philosophical mind for its consistency and profundity. This book, therefore, although entitled *The Upanishads*, consists mostly of a free rendering of Śankara's commentary, and so is essentially an exposition of the non-dualist Vedānta philosophy.

It is not clear, however, for whom the book is intended. For the general reader Śankara's interminable and often dull commentary, even in Nikhilananda's condensed form, is an intolerable distraction obscuring the magnificent simplicity of the Upanishads themselves. The scholar, on the other hand, will demand a more complete and literal rendering of Śankara's own words. The philosopher will find a large part of the commentary, concerned with ancient pseudo-science, plays on words, and far-fetched exegesis, to have little philosophical interest. I am in the paradoxical position of considering this a very fine book and yet wondering to whom I would recommend it.

The most important aspect of the book, of course, is the philosophy which it teaches, the doctrine of non-dualist Vedānta, that the self is Brahman, which alone is real, one without a second, the world being illusory and liberation being attained by knowledge. The *Aitareya* is a creation myth, but the commentary explains, "The purpose of the Upanishad is to demonstrate the sole reality of Brahman and not to emphasize the details of the process of creation" (p. 32). In the *Brihadāranyaka* and its commentary it is repeatedly emphasized that no works can bring liberation: "Even if one who does not know It (the Self) should perform here on earth a great many meritorious acts, those acts will in the end surely perish for him" (p. 128); "Liberation is not the result of any action; otherwise it would be non-eternal"

(p. 294); "The knower of Brahman has no connection with work" (p. 304); "Knowing It [Brahman] one is not touched by evil action"—note, "This includes good action also; for both good and evil belong to the phenomenal world" (p. 304f). Liberation is attained only by knowledge: "I [Śankara] am writing this concise commentary on the Upanishad for the sake of those who wish to turn away from samsāra [phenomena], so that they may attain the knowledge of the identity of Brahman [Reality] and ātman [self], which destroys avidyā [ignorance], the cause of the projection of the phenomenal universe" (p. 76).

We do not have to go to India to learn that the world of ordinary experience is not reality but appearance. This has been taught by Western philosophers from Plato on, most systematically by Kant. But we may have to go to India to find the theoretical and practical implications of this doctrine developed uncompromisingly and accepted seriously. It is a corollary of this thesis that the laws of the empirical world can be known a priori, as Kant pointed out. But it is also a corollary that freedom from the empirical world, including the empirical ego, can be attained by knowledge of the truth. Liberation from illusion is accomplished not by any acts within the illusory context but by a conversion of attention from illusion to reality. Such conversion may be anticipated both by faith and by a rational understanding of its validity. This rational understanding, based on a rational analysis of experience, constitutes the non-dualist philosophy.

The truth or falsity, theoretical interest, and practical application of the non-dualist philosophy are in no way dependent on the cultural environment in which it has been developed. If true, it is equally true for everybody, is certainly interesting, and is of universal application. If false, it is refutable, since it appeals only to ordinary logic and ordinary experience. It has nothing to do with mysticism, nothing to do with religion, and nothing to do with the peculiar features of Hindu culture or tradition. In recent years the West has learned a great deal about India. Perhaps, in philosophy at least, we can also learn something from India.

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Japanese Religion In The Meiji Era. Compiled and edited by KISHIMOTO HIDEO and translated and adapted by JOHN F. HOWES. Tokyo: Obonsha, 1956. xix, 377 pp.

The compiler and part author is a well known and honored figure in Japanese scholastic circles. Dr. Kishimoto is a graduate of the University of Tokyo and has taught at Harvard and Stanford universities. He delivered the Haskell Lectures at the University of Chicago in 1954. At present he is head of the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Tokyo.

John F. Howes, the translator, has had unique training for his task. A former student of Japanese at the Naval School of Oriental Languages, Boulder, Colorado, he served in Japan as translator-interpreter for the occupation forces, traveled extensively in Asia, specialized in the modern history of China and Japan at Columbia University, and later did research work in Japan under a Fulbright fellowship. His previous work on Protestantism in Japan recommends him as an able scholar. His qualifications are well spoken of by his Japanese colleagues.

Japan is just now entering on the commemoration of one hundred years of modern history. As one means to that celebration, a Centenary Cultural Council has been formed with the two-fold object of interpreting the significant events and movements of that momentous period to the Japanese people themselves, and at the same time presenting to readers abroad the data for a general understanding of the fortunes of Japan in her fateful journey along the road to modernization.

To this end, the Centenary Cultural Council, with the financial aid of the Japanese government, contemplates the publication of eighteen volumes divided into two general categories: the cultural history of the Meiji Era (1868-1912) and the history of Japanese-American cultural relations (1853-1953). Every important area in the national life outside of political and military affairs is to be explored and signalized by a special volume: literature, religion, law, education, thought, music, amusements, livelihood—to name only a few of the studies contemplated. All will be translated into English.

The volume on religion which we have under examination here is the second of the projected books to appear in print, having been preceded by *Japanese Literature in the Meiji Era* published in the

spring of 1955. The reader of the book on religion will need to keep in mind the fact that the original was written in Japanese and primarily intended to reach the level of university under-graduates studying their own national history. Likewise, accommodation to a special group of Western readers is indicated in the translation. We are informed that the Council desired a translation that would meet the needs of under-graduate writers of term papers, or would serve as a text for graduate students specializing in the study of the Far East.

The work consists of five essays, each written by a team of two Japanese experts in the area discussed. After an introductory chapter on Religion in the Tokugawa Period, sections deal in order with Shinto, Buddhism and Christianity, followed by a concluding section on Religion and Social Development. Even the most ardent of Western propagandists might be a little surprised to find that the English translation gives as much space to Christianity as it does to Shinto and Buddhism combined.

The purposes behind the undertaking placed special difficulties in the pathway of the translator. References and allusions that would be readily apparent to the Japanese student might be unintelligible to the Western reader without appropriate explanation in the form of notes. On the other hand the introduction of too many notes might easily submerge the original. The problem was solved by the elimination of all notes except for a special few and the use on the part of the translator of a principle of "adaptation," meaning the introduction into the body of the text itself of the necessary explanatory material. This was done in cooperation with a group of Japanese scholars for the entire first draft with the exception of the section on Christianity. Mr. Howes then composed a corrected translation which was circulated to the various authors for comments. The final revision was done by the translator alone.

In spite of much evidence of masterly work on the part of the translator and his collaborators the book does not escape the impression of having been put together by a committee. At its best it abounds in discriminating analysis, penetrating insights and fruitful summaries; in other places it is repetitious and patchy.

The section on the "Disestablishment of Shinto" must be read with special caution. The authors outline in detail the abortive attempt of the government early in the Meiji Era to concoct a state religion by

utilizing both Shinto and Buddhism. The synthesis was called *Daikyō* or "Great Religion" and the agency of propaganda was called *Daikyōin* or "Great Religion Institute." The attempt was a signal failure. Summarizing this denouement, the authors say: "The government eventually abandoned attempts to make Shinto a national religion and stopped trying to unify worship and government. . . . In May, 1875, the government abolished the *Daikyōin* itself. This was one victory for religious freedom." (p. 73)

The situation in Japan is compared with that which existed in France when the radical forces of the French Revolution tried to use religion as a tool of government for forcing "the worship of reason" on the people. Then follows the noteworthy statement: "Its failure in Japan marked the end of the government attempt to impose religion on the people." (p. 77)

As a matter of fact State Shinto was never disestablished by any government in the Meiji Era. It was not until the SCAP Directive of December 15, 1945, that actual disestablishment took place. What really occurred with the abolition of the *Daikyōin* was the severing of all official relations with Buddhism. The idea of a joint state religion that would include Buddhism was abandoned. Buddhism and all other similar religions were given freedom, under law, to manage their own affairs as privately supported institutions, while a slightly purified Shinto was given special status as a state religion, destined to consolidate its position until it became a mighty engine of nationalism and emperor-centered militarism.

Ritual is essential to religion, except in its more personal and mystical forms, and this is particularly true of a state religion. The authors recognize that Shinto brought together government, education and ceremonies, but little is said about education and practically nothing about ceremonies. This in spite of the fact that right through the Meiji Era and onward into more recent times a determined effort was made by governmental authorities to overcome the inherited heterogeneity of the Shinto shrines by furnishing them with uniform rituals wherein the primary interests of the state religion came to clear focus. So true was this that Shinto priests came to disclaim the title of religionist in the sense used in either Buddhism or Christianity, looking on themselves as "ritualists" whose chief function was to conduct ceremonies appropriate to the inculcation of "national morality."

The material for the study of this phase of State Shinto is ready at hand. On April 13, 1875, uniform rituals (*norito*) and ceremonies for all Shinto shrines were established by national regulations. These were revised early in the twentieth century, but the official prescription of the contents of the *norito* remained throughout all changes as a dominant interest of State Shinto. The book under review does not even mention the word *norito*.

At certain points the discussion of Christianity should be checked for items that might puzzle the reader. What the translator calls the "Third General Conference of Christians," held in Tokyo in May, 1883, was a fellowship session of Japanese Christians, with nothing to do either in organization or sequence with the "Second Missionary Conference" held in Osaka only one month earlier. The Third General Missionary Conference was held in Tokyo, October 24-31, 1900.

The doctrine of the immaculate conception was never one that "troubled thinking men" among the Japanese people, at least in Protestant circles. (Does the translator mean virgin birth?) (p. 269)

The founding of the First Baptist Church of Tokyo is attributed to "another missionary named Arsol." (p. 215) the founder of this church was James Hope Arthur and the date was June 14, 1876. ("Arsol" out of "Arthur" seems to indicate what can be done with a name when it is transposed from English spelling into the Japanese syllabary and then back again into Roman script without consulting the original.)

In the opinion of this reviewer, the chief merits of the book are two in number: the exercise of fine interpretative insight and the adoption of universal historical standards. Two or three direct quotations may serve to suggest the flavor of the former.

> Once they [members of the Kumamoto and the Sapporo Bands early in the Meiji Era] came into contact with Christianity, however, they realized that their old ethical system was nothing but an unsatisfying community mechanism for preserving the feudal stratified society. The new God whom they faced made demands on their consciences. . . . Their ideal of loyalty did not change, but the object of that loyalty did change." (p. 204)
>
> The effect of the Meiji Restoration was to establish absolutism throughout Japan. Absolutism needs a kind of mythology to support it. The Meiji Restoration allied itself with State Shinto, that is, the cult of emperor worship, in order to establish this absolutism." (p. 324)
>
> The Meiji government utilized every opportunity to make the people believe that the Emperor was divine. It was government policy to insist that he was a god until he declared himself human at the close of World War II." (p. 343)

The weight of this absolutism was felt in all departments of Japanese life; it was particularly heavy over historical writing. Dr. Kishimoto in his "Compiler's Preface to the English Edition" makes note of the "invisible pressure" which made the historian of the Meiji Era apprehensive of political compulsion, thus "confining his freedom of objective and critical study." Scholarship the world over will rejoice that Japanese historical writers have been set free to apply to the examination of their own national development those universal standards of analysis and synthesis that they would apply to the critical study of all societies. A candid and scientific approach to the study of their national history, so long impossible to Japanese writers, has made its appearance.

D. C. Holtom

The Early Christian Church. By Philip Carrington, Archbishop of Quebec. Cambridge: At the University Press, 1957. 2 vols., pp. xx-520, xiv-520. $10 each, the set $17.50.

During a scholarly career divided between New Zealand, England, and Canada Philip Carrington has been especially interested in the formulation and transmission of the catechetical tradition of the early Church. As Archbishop of Quebec he worthily maintains the Anglican tradition of a learned hierarchy, and now exemplifies it in this study on the grand scale of the first two Christian centuries, which challenges comparison with the standard works of Duchesne and Kidd, and more recently of Lietzmann. The work is carried through with a detail which few scholars are so happy as to find possible nowadays. Its thousand pages come down only through the end of the Severan dynasty in 235, although a final chapter carries the story on briefly through the Council of Nicaea. It does seem that the reader will find within these two volumes some presentation of everything that is known about Christian history in the period covered. The format of the work is attractive and even luxurious. Numerous illustrations give one a sense of the real world in which these events took place, and there is an admirable series of maps which direct due attention to the often neglected subject of ecclesiastical geography.

In reviewing a new work on a well-known subject one must concentrate on the author's special approach, and on the adequacy with which

he accomplishes what he sets out to do. As one of my teachers once observed, the historian may set out to record "what actually happened," but is restricted to answering the question, "what do the documents tell us?" He is a sense the slave of his sources. Since our sources for early Christian history are mainly its literary remains, there is a temptation to write the story of the early Church as a literary history, or even as a publishing enterprise. Carrington does not wholly escape this danger, especially since he includes in his story much of what is usually artificially separated from Church History under the separate discipline of New Testament studies. Many of the fifty-two chapters are in effect appreciations of pieces of Christian literature— "Corinth and Rome" is I Clement, "Hermas and his Angel" is the *Shepherd*, and so on. The composition of each of the Four Gospels is properly recognized as an important event in Church History, but one wonders if there isn't a little too much attention given to the literary enterprise as such. However this is an inevitable difficulty, and Dr. Carrington is well aware that the real importance of the literary documents is that they reflect the life out of which they came. His own special interests lead to a certain concentration on the tradition of Christian instruction and worship, so that we see church life through the eyes of the teacher (orthodox or heretical) rather than the taught, of the catechist rather than the catechumen. But this is obviously an important aspect of the subject, and Carrington's interest in detecting the regular program of teaching and worship behind the documents which so often deal with unusual crises is a refreshing variation in the study. The Dead Sea Scrolls appeared too late to be worked into the regular narrative, but a note on them expresses the author's point of view:

> They . . . will help us to understand the Jewish background of Christianity, which originated as a Jewish sect. In so doing they confirm the principle of Judaeo-Christian continuity which is emphasized in this history; for the Qumran sect expressed itself in the same liturgical media; the Hebrew scriptures, prophecies, apocalyptic, covenant language, catechism, baptisms, eucharistic meals and so forth. Even the ministry and orders were not unlike. Now this is exactly what we would expect; the same Jewish liturgical tradition is reproduced in both. (I, 46).

The Archbishop stands in a tradition too, though happily free of the academic temptation to concentrate on the latest scholarly fashion. He finds himself most naturally at home in the conservatively critical approach of what may be called the Westcott-Hort-Lightfoot-Gore

school, an honorable tradition of English scholarship. His introduction has a charmingly frank note on the effect of the scholar's 'tendency' on his historical work, and admits his own, which is to trust the evidence presented to us unless there are strong reasons to the contrary. On the whole he seems happier in reducing pseudonymity to the minimum, though he asserts it for II Peter and Jude, and is willing to find "mediate authorship" or the work of literary collaborators in I Peter, Ephesians "and other Epistles." (I, 201, 259-60). But as he well says, it is best to present the evidence honestly, no matter what conclusions may then be drawn from it (I, xviii). Personally I find that the effort to work the Pastoral Epistles into the career of St. Paul is not worth the complications it involves—and that the evidence Carrington cites to show that John the Elder of Ephesus was the same as John the Apostle tends rather in the other direction. I don't think the Archbishop will mind too much if other readers react in the same way, since he is careful to present the evidence and then on disputed points indicate his own conclusions without attempting to force them on the reader. And I welcome his care to indicate that in ancient documents words mean what they say and not necessarily what even academic tradition has read into them. (e.g. the elders and bishop in Titus, I 270).

The school to which Dr. Carrington generally belongs has approached the New Testament and other early Christian documents from a background of familiarity with the classical languages and literatures. Hence literary appreciation should be one of its merits; Carrington has an ear for poetic turns of phrase which sometimes escape the deadly serious student. This comes out in his appreciation of the dream-world of Gnostic speculation, and of the Syrian Catholicism reflected in what he calls "The Gnosis of Ignatius" of Antioch, orthodox enough but in its atmosphere the product of oriental mysticism rather than of Greek rationalism. So, he says, in his Epistle to the Ephesians Ignatius "turns from creed-form to poetry" and "gives us what is virtually the first Christmas carol"—

> A star in the heavens
> Shone brighter than any star;
> Its light was beyond description
> Its newness created wonder.
>
> And all the other stars
> Along with the sun and moon,

Became a chorus to this star,
  Whose light excelled them all.

So every charm and chain was broken,
  The ignorance born of evil vanished away;
The ancient throne was cast down,
  When God appeared as Man
Unto newness of life eternal. (I, 453).

Carrington is disposed to take apocalyptic as a form of poetic expression rather than as an effort at precise prediction; perhaps this leads him to take a little too easily problems over which others have labored somewhat too anxiously. His approach produces at least an interesting interpretation of Revelation, where he suggests that the style and ideas of the final editor of this inherited material are not as different from those of the author of the Fourth Gospel as critics since the third century have often supposed (I, 363-4). However he slips at this point when he suggests that it's too much to believe that there were two Johns at Ephesus, both called the Elder and both disciples of Jesus. No critic has held that; Dionysius of Alexandria ascribed the Gospel to the Apostles and Revelation to the Elder, and modern critics who ascribe the Gospel to the Elder are likely to identify the compiler of Revelation as John the Prophet. (And here I note a question which a study like Carrington's suggests, although he himself doesn't raise it—can one compile a Revelation, or alternatively, is it possible for a work of editing and arranging to be considered inspired?)

Among so many facts there are of course a few loose ends, though considering the number of details involved remarkably few. The Emperor was *princeps Romani nominis* absolutely, not merely *princeps senatus*. Hence if the *potentior principalitas* which Irenaeus recognizes in the Roman Church reflected the imperial title, it would mean more than the "position as first in relation to others of the same standing" (II, 327) which Carrington sees in it. As *princeps* the Emperor was first citizen of Rome, though not as such autocrat over the Romans. The second Christian century is described as far as possible in strict chronological order. This is helpful in that we see the course of Church History unfolding as a contemporary might have seen it, confusing in that characters like Irenaeus on one side or Marcion on the other make a series of appearances on the stage at different points in their careers. (And like all other historians of the subject I know of, Carrington mentions the episcopate of Marcion's Church without indicating

where he got it from—as son of the Bishop of Sinope did he perhaps consider the office hereditary? II 59, 82).

So the Archbishop carries the story on, with the thoroughness of a textbook (including chronological tables at appropriate places), and much of the attractiveness of a novel, thus combining the diverse merits of the standard works of Kidd and Duchesne. He remains very close to the sources, presenting some of the shorter ones (brief Acts of Martyrs and the Muratorian Fragment on the Canon of the New Testament, for instance) in full or almost so, and with generous summaries and extracts from others which may satisfy the casual reader and stimulate the student to further inquiries. He never forgets that behind the literature of the early Church lies its life, in the religious, political, and social context of the ancient world, Jewish, Greek, Roman, and Oriental. And complex as the story becomes, it remains the tale of the fellowship which began with Jesus and his companions on the hills of Galilee.

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The Christian Scholar in the Age of the Reformation. By E. Harris Harbison. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956. xi, 177 pp. $3.00.

Professor Harbinson's bok is the result of five lectures which he delivered at Princeton Theological Seminary in 1955. The audience, the author tells us, is partly responsible for the choice of his topic. As he points out in his Conclusion, he believes that the relation between scholarship and faith has yet to be solved in our own day. At the Age of the Reformation this relationship was felt in many individual cases as a serious conflict. Tertullian's pointed question, "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem, the Academy with the Church?", which Professor Harbison quotes in the first chapter, is one of the main themes in the book. The reader will not find any solution to the problem but a faithful description of the different views on the subject taken by prominent scholars in the Age of the Reformation and before.

In an introductory chapter Professor Harbison discusses "Scholarship as a Christian Calling" of such eminent religious personalities as Jerome, Augustine, Abelard, and Aquinas. Of the two church fathers,

Jerome's solution of combining his tremendous appetite for scholarship with Christian faith was in some ways simpler and not as clean-cut as Augustine's. Professor Harbison points out how Jerome after his famous vision transferred his love for learning from the secular realm to the religious. Even afterwards, however, he remained attracted to pagan writers. Augustine, on the other hand, came, after a long road of doubt and aberration, to the more radical conclusion that he was first of all a Christian and that the scholar in him occupied only second place.

Abelard and Thomas Aquinas breathed another air of scholarship than the Church fathers. For Jerome and Augustine neither the meaning of the Catholic Church nor of the Christian dogma was clearly formulated. This made the conflict for them sharper since more was left to their own decision. In contrast, the two masters of the dialectic method were born into a well defined religious situation. For them there could never be any doubt that scholarship and reason were the servants of faith. It is, therefore, not surprising that most of the humanists Professor Harbison deals with in his book feel akin to the Church fathers rather than to the great philosophers of the Middle Ages. The scholars in the Age of the Reformation faced a religious situation which had become open again.

In his chapter on "The Revival of Learning," Professor Harbison relates the new methods of research developed by Renaissance scholars such as philology and history to the reawakened conflict between learning and faith. His first example is Petrarch—whom Professor Harbison calls a "badly integrated person"—who foreshadows the difficult inner struggle between the new emphasis on the classics and Christian faith, which the humanists had to meet. But not all scholars had feelings of guilt like Petrarch because of their love for pagan writers. Valla, like Pico della Mirandola, considered himself according to the author a devout Christian with a tremendous interest in scholarship. Neither did John Colet, the famous teacher at Oxford and preacher at St. Paul's Cathedral, experience any "guilty love" for the classics. Professor Harbison makes it clear that Colet's scholarship never challenged the wisdom which he knew could alone be found in the Bible.

It was through his conversations with Colet in Oxford that Erasmus became convinced that it was possible to be both a good scholar and a

good Christian. Professor Harbison, devoting a whole chapter to the great Dutch humanist, gives a lively account of his scholarly achievement. Like his idol Jerome, Erasmus tried to find true Christianity by means of classical scholarship. How did the prince of the humanists solve the conflict between learning and faith? Professor Harbison seems to feel that Erasmus' scholarly interest was the restoration of primitive Christianity and that he used the means of modern scholarship in order to reach his goal. In his opinion, the Dutch humanist, who was well aware of the limitations of all human endeavor did not sense any serious problem in his vocation. In a latter chapter the author mentions Erasmus' warning "against the dangers to Christian faith of a too enthusiastic classicism." (p. 146) Was this remark perhaps related to Erasmus' own life-experience? Had he not achieved an unheralded victory of scholarship over faith?

In the next chapter Professor Harbison discusses Luther, who, like his beloved Augustine, considered himself a Christian scholar with the definite emphasis on Christian. After the event of his "conversion," faith was clearly more important to him than any learning. Like Augustine, Luther held religious experience vastly superior to any scholarship. It is obvious from Professor Harbison's pages that the German reformer made a conscious decision in favor of the "Word of God," which was clearer and simpler than human reasoning. Luther's attitude to scholarship may be compared to Colet's. Both felt that a pious mind was the best guide to wisdom and true Christian scholarship.

The Christian humanists whose scholarship Professor Harbison has explored so far had little use for the great scholastic thinkers. It was left to Calvin, the most influential of the reformers in the sixteenth century, to quote Thomas Aquinas with respect. But the author finds in Calvin's scholarship also traits of both Jerome and Augustine. With Jerome he shared his early enthusiasm for the classical writers; with Augustine he had his conversion in common, which gave his thinking a definite new direction. In the Preface to his "Commentary on the Psalms," published in 1557, Calvin expressed preference for a scholarly life of reading and writing. At the same time he felt called upon by God to become both a teacher and a preacher. Professor Harbison concludes that Calvin never quite lost his feeling of guilt because of his predilection for quiet study. The ruler of Geneva justified scholar-

ship before his own conscience in pointing to its usefulness for the promotion of the Kingdom of God.

Professor Harbison makes a valuable contribution to our understanding of the relationship between scholarship and faith. Moreover, the reader gains an important insight into the meaning of scholarship though this is not a central theme in the book. It is a well known fact that the scholarly work of both Jerome and Augustine was instrumental in consolidating the Catholic Church. However, a similar enthusiasm for learning in the sixteenth century had the opposite effect. Scholarship in the Age of The Reformation was not only a vocation that could or could not be put in the service of religion. It was a weapon which, in the hands of many humanists—both Protestant and Catholic—caused the disintegration of religious truth. There is obviously no scholarship per se. Learning is imbedded in the historic situation in which it occurs and from which it receives its substance.

Professor Harbison's book is much broader than any short review can indicate. With the patience of a true scholar and love for his peers, he has explored the many aspects and the many conflicts of a Christian scholar's calling. Each humanist whom the author discusses in his slender but rich volume has gone his own path of learning. Professor Harbison leads us into the workroom of the humanists where they come to life as full human beings.

The student of both secular and religious learning will read the book with great profit. It will help him to rethink and solve for himself the question which Professor Harbison raises at the end of the book: How can we bridge the separation between Christian and secular learning at our universities and seminaries? The student will also find the many biographical references very helpful.

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Geneva and the Coming of the Wars of Religion in France 1555-1563. By Robert M. Kingdon. Geneva: Librairie E. Droz, 1956. ix, 163 pp. 22 Sw. Fr.

With the successful rout of the Perrinists early in 1555, Calvin became master of Geneva. That long-sought end accomplished, he

turned at once toward France and the far greater problem of establishing the Reformed Church in his native land. The book under consideration is an absorbing study of the ensuing missionary enterprise, certainly one of the most momentous in the history of sixteenth-century Protestantism.

By means of extensive and complicated archival research, Mr. Kingdon, now Assistant Professor of History at the State University of Iowa, has attempted to recover from the often incomplete and even fragmentary Registers of the Geneva Company of Pastors the story of the 88 men who were involved in the missions, 105 in all, sent from Geneva to France between 1555 and 1562, the year of the outbreak of the first religious war. The results of this research are set forth in detail in the five chapters of Part One devoted, respectively, to the social background, training, examination, placement and discipline of the pastors. Mr. Kingdon stresses the extraordinary care which the Geneva Company exercised in its choice of candidates for France; he describes the rigorous training which they received in Latin, Greek, Hebrew and Biblical exegesis; he points to the interesting fact that they were not only examined thoroughly in the languages and interpretation of Scripture, but also in their ability to speak well; even their private lives were apparently subjected to the closest possible scrutiny. And only after such qualifications had been fully met were they then assigned to those churches in France for which the Company believed they were best suited. These chapters, although short, are rich with new and fascinating material, all of it scrupulously documented. Such are the limits of a review, however, that mention of only two especially significant details can be made.

Assignment to a post in France was invariably accompanied by an accrediting letter from the Geneva Company of Pastors; indeed, regardless of how great their need, the French churches were exceedingly reluctant to accept a new minister without one. The Geneva letter thus came to be a peculiarly powerful instrument for maintaining Calvinist orthodoxy as well as discipline at a distance, so much so that it was even attacked for this very reason, most notably by Sebastian Castellio who, in 1562, wrote bitterly of the Company letters "by which everywhere where they (the pastors) will go, they can be known from the unfaithful, and prove that they are faithful, that is to say Christian."

Exhaustive research has also thrown considerable light on the character of the pastors sent to France in the years 1558 and 1559. After 1557 there was a very real tension between Geneva and the government of Berne on matters both theological and administrative. It had wound to such a pitch by 1558 that four ministers were actually "banished by the Seigneurs of Berne from their lands", only to be followed by twenty-six more in 1559. Because these men were advocating strict Calvinist theological and administrative ideas they naturally fled to Geneva where they were cordially welcomed. Significantly enough, however, they were sent as soon as possible to important posts in France. Thus even before they undertook the dangers of the French evangelical mission they had already given ample proof of their theological orthodoxy and their personal courage. Altogether fully half of the total number of men sent to France were such exiles from Berne. Little wonder then, in Mr. Kingdon's words, that "a relatively small number of Calvinist pastors managed to organize religious discontent in France into a militant church in less than a decade." (p. 14)

The remainder of the book concentrates somewhat less on the individual men. The focus is now rather the institution which they were secretly building in France and the complex relationships which Geneva maintained with it, also largely in secret. Again through close archival research Mr. Kingdon has revealed that even after the convocation of the first National Synod in Paris in 1559 the local French churches and synods continued to look to Geneva for advice, for aid, and always for more preachers. In 1561 alone the Company sent out 151 missions involving a total of 142 men, and early in 1562 demands from France were so overwhelming that the city of Lausanne for a while had no preachers at all. Books, too, as well as men came from the city. Geneva was quick to seize on the propaganda possibilities of printing, and as a result a veritable "flood-tide" of political and religious books and pamphlets poured into France, the peak of such production, interestingly enough, falling likewise late in 1561 and early in 1562 when 27,400 copies of Beza's Psalms were issued from Genevan presses. Moreover, just as the accrediting letter of the Company served to maintain orthodoxy among the men, so now did the Company's censorship maintain the orthodoxy of the books. "The rigid control exercised by these ministers meant, of course, that the bulk of

the material leaving the presses of Geneva for French and other readers was carefully molded to the theological convictions of Calvin himself. The very title-page credit to the city of Geneva was an implicit Calvinist imprimatur" (p. 98).

In the two closely written final chapters Mr. Kingdon then demonstrates how the Protestant churches in France were utilized as crucial agencies for the military and political activity of the Huguenot revolt, pointing out that by 1562 "politics and religion had become so inextricably entwined that the ecclesiastical structure built by the men of Geneva was in fact now operating on a military basis." (p. 116) One specific example must suffice. On June 28, 1562, Charles du Puy, Sire de Montbrun, leader of the Huguenots in the Dauphiné, issued an order for the mobilization of all available troops in the area in addition to "all others capable of carrying arms, on pain of being hanged and strangled, their goods confiscated without any hope of grace." What is so significant is that the order was sent to all "the judges, chatellains, consuls, syndics or deacons of the churches" in the Dauphiné. So copious indeed is such evidence that the historian of Calvinism can only concur with Mr. Kingdon's nicely phrased conclusion that "the structure of the French Reformed Church must be considered a basic factor of religious revolution in France" (p. 128). What had been suggested in 1948 by Richard Nuernberger in his *Die Politisierung des Franzoesischen Protestantismus* has now been substantially, if not conclusively, proved.

Mr. Kingdon's scholarship is of the first order. The annotation is learned and accurate and there are seven useful statistical appendices in addition to a judiciously critical bibiography. Above all he displays throughout a sovereign command of particularly difficult, occasionally intractable sources. Regrettably he does not display a similar command of the language, although infelicities such as the elisions on page 45 are rare. There is, too, a want of discrimination in the book in that rather too much material in the text would have been better placed in the footnotes. Notwithstanding, Mr. Kingdon is aware that progress in understanding the past is very much a matter of asking the right questions, even though they are frequently unanswerable. He has set himself such an one when he inquires into "the process by which ideological leadership may assist social smoldering toward ex-

plosion." (p. 128) His book is a genuine contribution, not only to sixteenth-century studies, but towards our understanding of that larger question as well.

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Changing Conceptions of Original Sin. By SHELTON SMITH. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955. xi, 229 pp. $3.50.

Professor Smith has written a conscientious, carefully documented, and highly readable survey of the doctrinal positions and disputes concerning original sin in American Protestant thought from the beginnings of the New England theology through Horace Bushnell and Walter Rauschenbusch down to Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich. He concentrates his attention solely on the concept of original sin, and states that he is not interested here in the development of institutions but in the history of this religious idea. (p. 71)

The reader is left with the question as to what significance Dr. Smith finds in this history. The earlier part of the story in the theology of Jonathan Edwards and its sequel has been frequently told; but Dr. Smith scarcely refers to other histories and unaccountably does not even mention one of the most important critical studies, Joseph Haroutunian's *Piety vs. Moralism.* The debates between Calvinists and their opponents over the "nature of human nature," the cause of sin, and the relation of all men to Adam, have their intrinsic interest and logic; but surely the issues involved run deeply into the whole intellectual and religious context in which the discussions took place. But it is these connections with the changing concepts of nature and man, and the changing order of American religious life which Dr. Smith chooses to leave largely in the background. For example, when he refers to the "romantic anthropology" of Henry Ware who argued against Leonard Woods' Calvinism, the significance of the characterizing adjective is not developed. Is the debate over original sin an issue between Calvinism and "romanticism"? That would be an important thesis, if developed. Again there is the controversy over "means" of salvation in relation to revivalism. Here is a point at which the practice of religion forms the significant context for the

discussion of the fall and original sin, and helps to explain the "changing conceptions" but these institutional factors are scarcely treated. Or again, Dr. Smith says that the acceptance of the idea of evolution led in the liberal period to a progressive philosophy of history. But there is a considerable body of evidence that the progressive philosophy came first; and if it did not precisely lead to the acceptance of the concept of evolution, it certainly helped to determine the kind of view of evolution which many religious thinkers took in the later nineteenth century.

In the earlier part of the work Dr. Smith gives no indication of his own sympathies in the controversies. In the later chapters on the liberal theology he suggests, through a few phrases, that he regards the liberal theology as lacking in realism and as not taking a serious view of the human problem. (p. 177) But what is the criterion of seriousness here? Dr. Smith does not state his own theological presuppositions which underlie such a theological judgment, and as a result it lacks force in the present volume.

The expositions of Niebuhr's and Tillich's theologies are carefully done. Dr. Smith comes to the conclusion that the issue between the two theologians revolves around the place of ontology in Tillich's thought, and he concludes with the suggestion that Dr. Niebuhr also has ontological presuppositions which he is in process of reexamining. This is an interesting observation, but again we are left quite in the dark as to what meaning it has for the significance of the shifting views of original sin. Are ontological presuppositions the real clue to the view taken of human nature? Or does theology begin with a practical and experimental view of human nature and then seek a doctrine of God which will illumine the situation of man? Some internal analysis of the different perspectives in which the doctrine of original sin occurs or is rejected is surely called for here, in order to throw light upon the meaning of the "changing conceptions." This book is a clearly written outline of some important materials for such an analysis; but the theological and historical interpretation which would throw light upon the meaning of these materials is not given in the present volume.

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Sin and Science. By HOLTAN P. ODEGARD. Yellow Springs, Ohio: The Antioch Press, 1956. 245 pp. $3.00.

It is a tribute to Reinhold Niebuhr's thought that within his lifetime it already has provoked considerable analysis and criticism. Though this book is not, as its jacket claims, "the first full length study" and "analysis-in-depth" of Niebuhr's theology, it is a provocative discussion, at once appreciative and bitingly critical, of "Reinhold Niebuhr as Political Theologian." This, Odegard's subtitle, should, I believe, have been used as his title because it describes far better than the title he uses what he undertakes, whereas "Sin and Science" connotes worn out and trivial battles. Odegard's task is neither worn out nor trivial.

The seemingly small matter of titles is indicative of a trouble which plagues this often perceptive work. The book exhibits a lack of clarity in theological terminology and of factual knowledge, both of the changes in Reinhold Niebuhr's thought and of the changing role he himself has played in the growth of religious and political thinking. This weakness is explained in part, but surely not excused, by the fact that Odegard is at present a city planner and was formerly a student of political science and still earlier of biochemistry. In our age of excessive specialization it is encouraging that such an author should undertake the "first full length study" of a major theologian. It is very discouraging, however, that in doing so he produced such odd words as "empiric" and such odder phrases as "the dogmatic nature of man." Still worse is his apparent unawareness of Niebuhr's early socialist and pacifist endeavors which preceded, contrary to Odegard, his theological revolt from liberalism to "neo-orthodoxy." That much-abused word, moreover, causes trouble as usual, for Odegard thinks that neo-orthodoxy is rejected by the best biblical scholars today. Perhaps in a more precise sense than he indicates, it is. If so, however, this leaves Odegard with the troublesome question of where Reinhold Niebuhr does stand in terms of his own analysis.

Unintentionally, moreover, the book exhibits throughout something of the ambivalence if not the contradictoriness of which it accuses Niebuhr. It is a curious mixture of praise—often indirect and scarcely deliberate—and of condemnation. This mixture is itself paralleled by a much more serious matter: Odegard's alternating success and failure in grasping fundamental issues. Thus, with discernment he puts his

finger on the center of Niebuhr's theology: sin as the continuing destruction of man's loving relation to God and to society. He exposes with skill the pragmatic if not scientific methodology of Niebuhr when the latter is operating as social and political critic. It is this allegedly incompatible commitment to the doctrine of original sin and to scientific method that Odegard finds most objectionable. Thus to express the issue is to set the stage for the difficult but urgent analysis of the role of empirical and evaluative judgments in political philosophy. It could have led Odegard to probe the question of statements of fact on the one hand and of value on the other hand. Instead of pressing this inquiry, Odegard unscientifically and roundly condemns Niebuhr.

The unhappy fact is that Odegard has walked straight into one of the battlefields of contemporary theological thinking, on which the fight of labels is taking place. He has done so, furthermore, with perhaps the most dangerous of leaders, Reinhold Niebuhr, the nuances of whose thought simply defy such categorizing even if it were desirable to attempt it. It is precisely this near semantic nightmare which causes not only many abler philosophers to despair of present day theological writing, but also causes several of the best theological minds to refuse to engage at all in genuine give-and-take because they assume it will amount to nothing more than an exchange of catchphrases. Both attitudes—to come in swinging and to stay out completely—probably are untenable. The point is that this book takes the least defensible approach and does little to clarify the issue.

Turning, then, to Odegard's contentions, both the manner of expression and the grounds of condemnation are interesting. At their lightest the former employ humor and sarcasm, leading him to write of Niebuhr's work as "The Course of a Faith in Sin" and of "The Irony of Sin." In their tone the judgments have a strange ring for one who champions the objective spirit of science. His writing bristles with expressions such as "incredible naivete", "dogmatism", and "dialectical fog". Much more serious is the content. Niebuhr is accused of an astonishing number of serious faults. He fails to see, according to Odegard, that *"all* psychological or inner character traits are more imposed than they are indigenous" and that "an impulse [to sin] is never exclusively intrinsic." Again, using a now rather worn criticism, Niebuhr has a false notion of *hybris,* love of power. His distorted

emphasis on sin leads to excessive pessimism, and this, in turn, is enervating. Worse still, his love of paradox, which produces more confusion than light, grows in part out of the fact, Odegard claims, that Niebuhr really has no standard but "the mind of Christ . . . and that is vague indeed." As a result the Bible is quoted according to choice and specific political decisions are made in a dangerously pragmatic way. Odegard is voicing the familiar claim that, conspicuously in Reinhold Niebuhr, but also in other political theologians, there is at best an indirect and obscure relation between theology and political thought and action. Niebuhr thus actually discourages the rational improvement of man, rejecting as he does, in an unwarranted way, the social sciences. As a finishing touch, Odegard says, Niebuhr now exhibits a growing and deplorable conservatism.

I do not wish to give the impression that Odegard simply slashes out irresponsibly at Niebuhr. Several of his castigations will appeal to many critical readers as being forceful, especially, for example, Niebuhr's pessimism regarding world government. As hinted above, moreover, there is even in Odegard a haunting sense of the constructive and profound in Niebuhr's thought. The conclusions, nonetheless, are overwhelmingly negative, and so bitterly so that Max Otto's jacket description of this work as ". . . a most careful and appreciative (!) setting forth of the Niebuhr ideology . . . fair spirited, thoroughgoing . . ." is, to paraphase Odegard, incredible.

The fundamental weakness of the book is that it does not perform the correctly envisioned task it set itself. It does not objectively analyze and evaluate the crucial issues embodied in Reinhold Niebuhr's theologically oriented political philosophy; the basic question of method (which is not merely "sin" vs "science"); his interpretation of human nature and the evidence which supports or fails to support that view; his interpretation of history; and, as seen above, the persistent question of the status of and relation between empirical and evaluative judgments. These and related issues require a more profound and painstaking analysis than they here receive. Indeed, this book leads one to doubt the competence of any one author, be he theologian or political scientist, to conduct such a full-scale study. It is an invitation to corporate study on the highest level.

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Systematic Theology. By PAUL TILLICH. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Volume II. *Existence and the Christ* (1957) xi, 187 pp. $4.50.

Existence and the Christ is the third part of Dr. Tillich's *Systematic Theology*. The first volume includes the methodological introduction, Part I, Reason and Revelation, and Part II, Being and God. To follow are Part IV, Life and the Spirit, and the fifth part is to be entitled History and the Kingdom of God. Parts III and IV were delivered as Gifford Lectures. Since some time has elapsed between the publication of the first and second volumes, Dr. Tillich has an opportunity in the present one to discuss certain criticisms and interpretations, and to provide a brief restatement of his major themes. He discusses again how his position stands beyond both naturalism and supranaturalism, why the concept of being is fundamental to his theology and the religious and metaphysical significance of the assertion that God is "being itself". And he outlines again his method of correlating existential questions with theological answers.

In *Existence and the Christ* Dr. Tillich's doctrine of the nature of God and our knowledge of him comes to its critical theological test as the context of his interpretation of the Christian affirmation that the final and saving revelation is given in Jesus Christ. The conviction grows as one reads that this is surely one of the supremely important articulations of Christian belief since the Protestant Reformation, and one of the permanently significant interpretations of human existence to arise in our era. As theologian, Tillich is perhaps closest to Schleiermacher in his interweaving of theological and philosophical perspectives; but there is also much of St. Thomas Aquinas' objectivity and use of rational analysis to achieve a delicately balanced structure of belief and reason. Tillich stands in general in the Augustinian idealistic and mystical tradition in his welding together of mystical experience and dialectical analysis. In the modern background there are, of course, Hegel and Schelling, followed by Kierkegaard and contemporary existentialism, with its dissent from the idealistic "essentialism" of Hegel; and the later Schelling.

Tillich's theology is radically Protestant in its rejection of the absolutizing of any human form or institution; yet in his appreciation of tradition and his positive evaluation of cultural forms as vehicles of spiritual meaning he is both liberal and in the broad sense catholic.

In this second volume Dr. Tillich's style remains what it was in the first, a highly schematic, condensed exposition of his position in the form of major propositions, stated, and developed. He does not ramble. He makes much of contemporary theological writing, including that of Barth and Brunner seem intolerably prolix by comparison. This paring down of the thought to definitive statement sometimes indeed leaves one feeling that further clarification would help; but on the whole he has achieved an admirable directness and lucidity. And the highly articulated structure gathers cumulative force as the system is developed. The whole has a moving eloquence which arises from the penetration and force of the thought itself.

There is no possibility of summarizing here the whole argument as thus far expounded, and this review is primarily concerned with Volume II; therefore, a few sentences concerning the conception of theology developed in Volume I must suffice. The first discussion establishes the method of correlation as the key to the work of Christian theology. Life drives men to ask questions about the meaning of their existence. When the questions concern our being or nonbeing they are matters of ultimate concern; and this is the criterion of authentic religious questioning. No formulation of the questions about the nature and structure of human existence can be answered through human reflection upon experience. That which is the object of our ultimate concern, being itself, must become manifest. The concrete apprehension of this manifestation is the response to revelation; which can only be grasped through an existential decision. The interpretation of a personal decision made in response to some disclosure of meaningful being is theological in character, whatever form it may take. Thus the Christian theologian, although he enters into discussion with philosophical formulations of both questions and answers, and must depend upon cultural formulations of the questions, gives his answers on the basis of that revelation which in Christian faith is taken as final. The theologian stands within a circle determined by his own faith and that of the Church. The meaning of the Christian faith emerges as the human questions, formulated in large part in philosophical terms, are given theological answers on the basis of the divine self-revelation.

The healing of the disruption of reason is the work of revelation; and revelation is the self manifestation of God who is being itself, beyond essence and existence. The final revelation must negate itself

without destroying itself, that is, it must point to God's overcoming of the estrangement of actual existence from its source. The Christian faith attests to the appearance of the final revelation in Jesus Christ.

The present Part III analyzes the meaning of the estrangement of existence from being, and the Christian claim that this estrangement has been overcome in Jesus Christ. Thus this discussion is in large part development of theses which have been anticipated in the previous analysis. The system is an interdependent whole; and not a collection of unrelated parts. The discussion of creation, goodness, and existence here in Part III returns to the theme which has been stated in Parts I and II. The world is created good; but all actualized existence manifests its estrangement from its essential goodness. What is most noteworthy about this discussion is that Professor Tillich here more explicitly than anywhere else to my knowledge adopts the existentialist analysis of the metaphysical problem as his own, and is willing to speak of "the alliance of existentialism and theology". (p. 31)

The existentialist position represents for Tillich the attack in Western philosophy upon the essentialism of Hegelian idealism with its identification of absolute goodness with what is coming to be actualized in the processes of history. Existentialism protests that the movement from essential being which is a state of potentiality characterized by "dreaming innocence" to actualized existence involves a disruption and estrangement. In Christian terms "dreaming innocence" is lost in the Fall and actual human existence is characterized by the behavior, the distorted self-knowledge, and all problems arising from sin. "Actualized existence and estranged existence are identical." (p. 44) Tillich develops his doctrine of sin under its aspects of unbelief, *hubris,* and concupiscence, and describes the form of man's attempts at self-salvation as exhibited in all aspects of human culture but supremely in religion, including the Christian religion.

Since the principal difficulties I have with the position lie at this point of the relation of existence to essence, I may raise a question here, before passing to the Christological discussion. What is not clear to me is how Dr. Tillich conceives the relationship of essence, existence, and actuality. The difficulty may arise in part from the fact that in our ordinary language to speak of something as having "existence" is to give it real being in space and time, a dynamic actuality. But for Dr. Tillich, that which precedes existence is potential being,

"dreaming innocence", which is a state having none of the depth and richness of actuality. Therefore, all the concrete value, growth, maturity and depth of human life arise within existence, and yet existence is estranged existence. But if essential being is "dreaming innocence" then surely Hegel was right, the fall from essential being was a rise. Everything in life which is deeper, richer, more valuable than "dreaming innocence" depends upon the Fall.

Why would it not be more meaningful to say that essential being is the full potential of actuality seen from the standpoint of the divine goodness? It is not merely "dreaming innocence", it is the structure of all possible good. That is our essential nature. That structure is never absent from our actual existence no matter how deep the estrangement, and this explains how existing being can be regarded both as an actualization of goodness and a manifestation of the estrangement of life from its essential goodness. "Innocence", in this view, would be actual life as yet untouched by the depth of the experience of either good or evil.

If one puts side by side many of Dr. Tillich's statements regarding existence and essence, a possible interpretation of his position may be that the category for concrete life is "actuality" and that "essence" and "existence" are abstractions which are necessary in order that we may speak about the relationship of actuality and being in view of the Fall. (See p. 28 for a statement which bears this out.) This interpretation would allow us to avoid any suggestion that "existence" is total estrangement without any structure of good, a position which Dr. Tillich certainly does not hold.

But it would still not be necessary to identify essential being with "dreaming innocence". It should be kept in mind that the full significance of Dr. Tillich's view of actuality and its relationship to existential estrangement can only be interpreted in the light of the doctrine of life and the spirit which is to follow. In his last paragraph in Volume II, he recognizes that a certain abstract character obtains in the analysis so far: "Man is not only determined by essential goodness and by existential estrangement; he is also determined by the ambiguities of life and history." (p. 180) The interpretation of the full force of this "also" may clear up what seem to me somewhat problematic elements in the position as so far stated.

The crux of the present volume from a theological point of view is

the treatment of revelation and history and the view of the historical and Biblical witness to Jesus as the Christ. Dr. Tillich deals with the historical character of the Christian faith, and the problems involved in our knowledge of the "historical Jesus", with the interpretation of the Christological dogma in its Biblical origins and patristic development, the creedal formulations of the doctrine of the Person of Christ and the meaning of the atonement. In less than eighty pages here is a theological critique of the tradition and a constructive development which in its freedom and its creative power should engage the attention of Christian thought for a long time to come.

Tillich's theology has shared the fate of most philosophical theology in being criticized as "gnostic" and "docetic" and thus of making the unique historical revelation as of no importance. To be sure, all the issues involved here are raised by any objective and honest discussion of the meaning of the life of Jesus of Nazareth for Christian faith; but it seems to this reviewer that Dr. Tillich has accepted fully the distinctive historical claim of the Christian faith to the saving event in history; and yet has faced profoundly the issues concerning historical factuality and the limits of our historical knowledge. He does not dissolve the meaning of Christ into a general abstract idea.

> "If the factual element in the Christian event were denied, the foundation of Christianity would be denied. Methodological skepticism about the work of historical research does not deny this element. . . . But faith does guarantee the factual transformation of reality in that personal life which the New Testament expresses in its picture of Jesus as the Christ." (p. 107)

His discussion of the life of Jesus and of the Christian assertion that Jesus is the Christ is surely one of the most important statements since Schweitzer's *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* and the bearing of the outcome on the theological problem is far more fully developed than it was by Schweitzer.

In his interpretation of the meaning of Jesus Christ, Dr. Tillich demonstrates concretely his claim that historical analysis can increase our knowledge of the reality which has become manifest in Christ. His analysis of the Biblical symbols Son of Man, Messiah, Son of God, as they have passed through specific stages of historical development, and his demonstration of how each symbol can and does lose its interpretative power when it is literalized in a supernatural scheme is an

extremely illuminating combination of phenomenological and historical criticism. (pp. 107-113)

In dealing with the Christological dogma, Tillich rejects Harnack's view that the Greek interpretation involved a corruption through intellectualization. Tillich holds that the patristic interpretation was necessary in order to preserve the meaning of the faith. At the same time, he believes that Nicea and Chalcedon failed "definitively" because they were caught in an attempt to relate the "nature" of God to human nature; and it is not possible to speak of "nature" in this sense as applied to God. Hence Tillich would substitute for the key to the doctrine of the Person of Christ the concept of the "unity of God and man", thus "replacing a static essence by a dynamic relation." (p. 148)

The central symbols which express the New Being manifest in Christ are the Cross and the Resurrection. The Cross means his subjection to the estrangement of existence, the Resurrection his overcoming of it. Tillich discusses the relations between the two symbols and offers the view that the Resurrection of the Christ means the restoration of him who was called the Christ and who suffered death, to his place as the Christ. "The Resurrection is the restitution of Jesus as the Christ." (p. 157)

Tillich looks also toward a recasting of the doctrine of the Atonement. He establishes certain principles for interpreting it in order to do justice both to the objective side, which Anselm's theory, at least in the West, most adequately represents, and the subjective element of man's appropriation of his acceptance by God.

This section on atonement and salvation is highly condensed and one wonders whether the acknowledgment of the subjective aspect of the redemptive action of God is compatible with the statement that faith "is not a human act though it happens in man". (p. 178) Also, anyone who has accepted Whitehead and Hartshorne's criticism of the traditional doctrine of God will ask how God can in Christ "participate in existential estrangement" (p. 175) and yet not take an element of suffering into the divine life itself. Tillich rejects patripassionism.

These questions will undoubtedly have more light shed upon them in the further sections. It is clear that Tillich has stated a theological

alternative to a purely confessional theology, or to the replacement of Christian theology by a philosophy of religion. Without trying to reinstate natural theology in its usual forms, he has so related the philosophic quest for being and meaning to the Christian faith as to propose a genuine alternative to most of the theological positions which claim attention in our century. For some his systematic theology will be regarded as an invalid rationalizing of the Christian faith. For many it will appear as a highly suggestive philosophical expression of religious experience which can be taken without the specific Christian and confessional element. But it appears to me that the real intent and accomplishment of Dr. Tillich is to show that the full truth of human existence can only be grasped through a meeting and ultimately a uniting of personal faith and rational understanding. He is interpreting the Christian faith to the mind of twentieth century man with such penetration that the self understanding both of the secular culture and of the Christian church is being deepened and clarified.

Daniel D. Williams

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Man seeks the Divine. By Edwin A. Burtt. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957. xii, 561 pp. $4.75.

This study in the history and comparison of religions by Professor Burtt of the Sage School of Philosophy at Cornell University is a welcome addition to the growing body of non-technical books dealing with religion in its broad world-wide manifestations. The author approaches his subject with the combined resources of his acknowledged capabilities as a philosopher and his long experience as a popular class-room teacher of the History of Religions. The result is more in the nature of a study in the Philosophy of Religion than the History of Religions, as such, for he succeeds in confronting the reader with the fundamental philosophical problems which cannot be ignored even in a beginning study of the multi-formed religious experiences and expressions which fill human history. However, this "philosophical" approach is not made independent of the historical realities furnished by the discipline of the History of Religions. The philosophical problems are interwoven with and made clear by an objective

discussion of the major religious systems and traditions of mankind as those beliefs and insights are to be seen in their best and ideal expressions.

Professor Burtt indicates in his Preface that in a broad sense his approach is humanistic. "This book proceeds on the modest assumption that while we cannot put ourselves in God's place and survey human history from His vantage point, we can learn a great deal about how man has thought of God. And this makes one of the most fascinating stories that the records of human experience permit us to tell." (pp. ix f.) Further, he makes clear that his major concern is not with popular religion and the cultic acts which are to be associated with the phenomenological study of religion. "I have tried to understand and present each religion at its best—in the forms and teachings which express the most ideal insight that its founder achieved and communicated, as best he could, to his followers. This rich deposit provides the norm that continually criticises and gradually elevates whatever in the religion as a whole falls short of its living spirit." (pp. x f.) The foregoing matters are important if one is to understand Professor Burtt's study for what it is: the attempt to discover the distinctive genius of the great religions as they separately reveal that genius in their answers to the fundamental questions which man asks about himself and his environment.

The basis for the general approach, attitude, and understanding which the book presents to the reader is to be found in the author's concern with the "pervasive needs by which men at any given time are dominated." He maintains that none of the important changes which have taken place in the major areas of human society are to be correctly and fully understood until their relationship to the developing demands or needs and primary interests which motivated them are brought into proper perspective. Fundamental to his whole approach is his conviction that human history reveals two great human needs and two dominant concerns which are the resultants of these needs. The first is "man's need to learn how to master the subhuman forces of nature sufficiently to win an assured position in relation to them." (p. 90) This need and the concern to master it has been the primary employment of much of humanity throughout its history. Human groups at the dawn of history down through the still remaining primitives of our own time have been engaged in this struggle, and

their religion was a reflection of this preoccupation. The degree in which any particular group adequately met this need and its ever-present problems was reflected in its position of advancement over the lowest levels of primitivism.

The emergence of human history as we know it occurred as some human groups succeeded in overcoming the first problem to the degree that a relative security removed the overburdening pressure which had marked every aspect of their individual and corporate existence. With this accomplished to some extent, such societies were now faced with "the need for each group of human beings to learn how to live successfully and happily with other groups of men and women . . ." (p. 91) With the coming of this second problem new dangers and new possibilities confronted man: the danger of the destruction of separate societies and, today, perhaps even the annihilation of humanity; the possibility of satisfying fulfillment in "the joy of free and integrated adjustment to the total universe" (p. 92):

> During the long period prior to the emergence of civilized life, the religious ideas and practices of men reflected . . . the dominance of their lives by the first of these two needs. When, through the arts of civilization, men became liberated over large areas of the earth from the absorbing preoccupation associated with that need, religion did not perish (as it might have done) but became radically transformed in ways which reflect, equally clearly, dominance by the second of these two needs and the concerns which it essentially involves. Here lies our basic key to the understanding of the great living civilized religions, in the significant features which they have in common and by which they are readily distinguishable from primitive cults. Instead of seeing the divine through spectacles shaped by the first need, they envision the divine in the perspective determined by the second. (pp. 92 f.)

Proceeding from the foregoing analysis of human history and the history of religion, Professor Burtt briefly turns his attention to four basic features which he considers to be common to each of the living civilized religious faiths. These are the acceptance of a universal moral responsibility as a religious duty of man; an obvious and vigorous trend toward monism in their understanding of the Divine and the world; the discovery of the soul of man as an essentially moral and nonmaterial essence; and, the realization of new possibilities of happiness for man, possibilities which reach out beyond the mere satisfaction of his natural desires. (pp. 104-25)

To discuss the main body of the book in this review would be to

simply review Professor Burtt's description and subsequent understanding of the leading religions of the East and the West in the light of what has been suggested in the previous paragraphs. The weakness of his presentation is primarily due to his acknowledged omission of the results of phenomenological investigation which may in some instances fail to give the uninitiated reader a sense of the variety and the depths and heights of the particular religion under discussion. The strength of the presentations of each of the religious traditions and systems is the natural result of his attempt and success at getting at the central ideas which distinguish them and make them meaningful to their adherents.

In common with more than one contemporary writer in this general field, Professor Burtt concludes his work with a discussion of the present world religious situation and the possibilities for the future. Though many will disagree with him in his suggestions and his conclusions, he demonstrates his intellectual awareness and his sincere religious concern in his discussion. It is to be hoped that his concluding remarks will provoke others to serious thought upon the same matters. Many may reject the thoughts of one writer as he seeks ways and means to lift humanity beyond its present religious provincialism, but none of us can afford to refuse to seek along with him the solution to the problem he so cogently presents to us.

PHILIP H. ASHBY

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Symbols of Transformation. By C. G. JUNG. New York: Pantheon Books, 1956. xxix, 557 pp. $5.00.

When "Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido" appeared in 1912, it became the "landmark set up on the spot where two ways divided" the "personalism of Freud and Adler" leading in one direction, Jung's concern with the "objective, impersonal facts" of the psyche in a very different direction, namely the role of certain basic mythological symbols in the spiritual transformation of man, ancient and modern. When Jung retired from active practice 37 years later, he undertook a thorough revision of this epoch-making work, because he found it hastily written and inadequately documented. This task was accomplished successfully: the Freudian as well as the collective aspects of

the "case" are presented convincingly, the documentation from the Greco-Roman and Patristic literature is thorough, giving the original texts and their English translations.

The new foreword of 1950 adds for the first time a few autobiographical remarks which reveal that the deep insight and conception of this work were the result of a serious personal crisis. As Jung put it: "This book was written in my 36th year. The time is a critical one, for it marks the beginning of the second half of life, when a metanoia, a mental transformation, not infrequently occurs. I was acutely conscious then of the loss of the friendly relations with Freud and of the lost comradeship of our work together. The practical and moral support which my wife gave me at that difficult period is something I shall always hold in grateful remembrance." (XXVI) The execution of the work had the character of a religious experience: "The whole thing came upon me like a landslide which cannot be stopped. The urgency that lay behind it became clear to me only later: it was the explosion of all those psychic contents which could find no room in the constricting atmosphere of Freudian psychology. . . . , I am thinking of the reductive causalism of his whole outlook, and the almost complete disregard of the teleological directedness which is so characteristic of everything psychic." (XXIII)

The contrast between Freud and Jung is illustrated strikingly by comparison with the decisive work in which Freud turned from his former physiological approach fully to his ultimate psychological orientation, *The Interpretation of Dreams*. This book too was written in the beginning of the second half of life, and in a state of inner crisis. Whereas Freud resolved his problem by way of intense analysis of his own dreams and their biographical background, Jung did not allow anything personal to enter the text of his book or even any of the three preceding forewords. In order to demonstrate the objective, impersonal character of the unconscious processes and to secure himself against "the oft-repeated charge (against psychoanalysts) that he had 'influenced' the patient" he used as material for analysis the fantasies of a completely unknown American woman, which Th. Flournoy had published in 1906 in *Archives de Psychologie* (Geneva) vol. V, 36-51. ("Some instances of subconscious creative imagination" by Miss Frank Miller of New York.) Jung's analysis of the psychic situation of "Miss Miller" is a fascinating tour de force which proved completely success-

ful. Six years after the publication of the book an American colleague informed Jung that the fantasies had been the prelude of a schizophrenic disturbance and that his "exposition of the case was so exhaustive that even personal acquaintance with the patient had not taught him 'one iota more' about her mentality."

More important than the correctness of the deductions regarding "Miss Miller" is the fact that Jung apparently resolved his own crisis in the confrontation with the same powers of the collective unconscious which had threatened and finally overcome the American girl, proving the common archaic ground against which these two so different individualities had to struggle for maturity. The basic problem is formulated as follows: "The psychic health of the adult individual, who in his childhood was a mere particle revolving in a rotary system, demands that he should become himself the centre of a new system. That such a step includes the solution . . . of the sexual problem is obvious enough, for unless this is done the unemployed libido will remain fixed in the endogamous relationship to the parents and will seriously hamper the individual's freedom. We must remember that Christ's teaching means ruthless separating a man from his family, and we saw in the Nicodemus dialogue (St. John 3, 4 ff) how he took especial pains to give regression (sc. rebirth) a symbolic meaning (p. 224 ff) . . . Both tendencies serve the same goal, namely freeing man from his family fixations. . . . For if he allows his libido to get stuck in a childish milieu, and does not free it for higher purposes, he falls under the spell of unconscious compulsion. Wherever he may be, the unconscious will then recreate the infantile milieu by projecting his complexes, thus reproducing all over again, and in defiance of his vital interests, the same dependence which formerly characterized the relation with his parents. . . ." (p. 414).

The 444-page analysis of the 15 pages of the "Miller fantasies" testify to the seriousness and the paradigmatic character of Jung's way of solving his Oedipus complex, the projection of his father fixation on Freud, on the suprapersonal level. This was no easy task, because Freud was a jealous, powerful father who forbade his spiritual sons to free themselves from his personal system of values. Others endowed with less vitality than Jung succumbed in this conflict intellectually or emotionally. At least one became a suicide, the highly endowed Herbert Silberer, who, like Jung, had become aware of the anagogic qual-

ity of religious symbols. ("Probleme der Mystik und ihrer Symbolik," H. Heller, Wien u. Leipzig, 1914).

In tracing the symbolic productions of "Miss Miller" back to their universal prototypes in man's religious history, Jung became confronted with the deepest meaning of religious experience. He himself, like the followers of the mystery cults he describes, became transformed and thus gained the power to transcend his old nature-bound condition. This existential background gives to the somewhat overwhelming display of erudition a sustained quality of fascination. In the end Jung emerges with conclusions about the religious situation of modern man which command attention by the authenticity of the spiritual effort behind them.

Jung sees the superiority of Christianity over its original main competitor: the Mithraic cult, in the recognition that in order to be spiritually reborn not only 'man's animal instinctuality (symbolized by the bull) has to be sacrificed, . . . but the entire natural man (symbolized by Christ), who is more than can be expressed by his theriomorphic symbol. Whereas the latter represents . . . utter subjection to the law of the species, the natural man means something specifically human, namely the ability to deviate from the law, or what in theological language is known as the capacity for 'sin.' It is only (due to) this variability . . . that spiritual development has been possible for Homo sapiens at all." (p. 434) Man's dangerous dilemma is the choice between, on the one hand, the surrender to the certainty of the law of natural instincts involving the sacrifice of his spiritual freedom, on the other hand, the danger of consciousness being separated from its instinctual foundations. "Through the sacrifice of the natural man an attempt is made to set up conscious will in the place of natural impulse. The loftiness of this ideal is incontestable, . . . yet it is precisely on this lofty height that one is beset by a doubt whether human nature is capable of being moulded in this way. . . . Only experience will show whether the self-sacrifice of the natural man, as the Christian understands it, is a final solution or a view capable of further modifications." (p. 434) The impressive development of consciousness in the course of a few centuries is linked to the Christian "renunciation of his animal instincts, and the disciplining of man's specifically spiritual functions for the sake of a spiritual goal beyond this world. . . . This physical impossibility of dogma (is) a necessity, because it is a symbol of transcendental unconscious processes, bound up with unavoidable

development of consciousness. Belief in dogma is an equally unavoidable stop-gap which must sooner or later be replaced by adequate understanding and knowledge, if our civilization is to continue." (p. 435)

The development of Jung since the first edition of the present book bears out the creative value of his intellectual and spiritual effort, although details may be seen differently by experts in the many spheres of science involved. Due to the attempt to preserve some of the original work and at the same time to give it the benefit of the author's more mature insights the theoretical parts of the work are uneven. This is particularly noticeable with respect to the questionable concept of libido which Freud understood as a special sexual form of physical energy. Jung took over the term, but although he redefined it broadly as "psychic" energy, he treated it originally as if libido obeyed the laws of 19th century physics and could be put to work by means of symbols in the same way in which heat could be put to work in the steam engine. (See in particular "On psychic energy" *Contributions to Analytical Psychology,* New York, 1928). He held on to the word in the text, using it mostly in the sense of "subjective intensity" (p. 165) but in the above quotation from page 414, also as if libido obeyed the Mayer-Helmholtz law of conservation of energy. It indicates the evolution of Jung's thought that he dropped the ambiguous concept from the title of the new edition, but he could not eradicate in this and other respects all evidence of his existential struggle between dedication to the transcendental spirit on the one side, romantic fantasies about "the beautiful harmony of nature" (p. 235) on the other side. Even in one of his latest works, on synchronicity (see *Review of Religion,* Nov., 1956, p. 85f) the conflict is in evidence. This manifest tension does not lessen, but rather heightens the value of the book as a document of the spiritual transformation of a deep, but intensely human, scientist.

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The Meaning of Immortality in Human Experience. By WILLIAM ERNEST HOCKING. New York, Harper and Brothers, 255 pp. $3.50.

Professor Hocking is a philosopher's philosopher in the sense that he writes with insight and clarity on the great themes which philosophers from Plato on have found significant. Freedom, the self, the

good life, creativity, mind, actuality, physical nature, intuition all concern him, and each he treats with imagination. He is a true philosopher also in the sense that he continually gives the impression of being more eager to take his readers a step nearer what is real and valid than to score a point over his opponent. He belongs in the tradition of idealism, yet he is much more than a defender of a particular creed. Like Royce he is both idealist and pragmatist; like James he is both a realist and a mystic. But his thought is not merely eclectic. The fact is simply that in his hands the usual classifications show their arbitrary nature and the larger agreements make their presence felt.

Although about three-fifths of this book appeared in 1937 (under the title *Thoughts on Life and Death*) it reads remarkably well today. One cannot help wondering how large a part of the output of 1957 will stand up with the same persuasiveness twenty years from now! Unlike so much of logical positivism on the one hand or existentialism on the other this writing is free from the gusty shiftings that mark our contemporary winds of doctrine and has a substantial quality that gives the reader a feeling of security. Its meditative calm puts it above the strident cries of the competing legions. Like the harmonious and stately lines which provide the background for the struggling figures on the famous Alexander sarcophagus it conveys its own message of the calm that follows the storm and the peace for which the battle itself is fought.

In this book as in so many others Professor Hocking is also the religious man's philosopher and in his search for the meaning of immortality as in the inquiry into the meaning of God he shows himself one of our most perceptive religious writers on religious themes. Belief in immortality, he says, is not wishful thinking, and death is not merely negative. Immortality represents the universe's obligation to us, and death is the price of love, making new life and new love possible. Mental events require a body, it is true, but there is no real reason why there may not be a whole class of bodies in which they find expression. The present physical body is not the only one conceivable. We should remember that the self has two aspects. It is within the world, excursive, caught in the net of physical events, and also reflective, creative, standing outside of physical nature, grasping the whole of a time-series and therefore pervading all time in a single act. The

problem is not really immortality so much as "immortability", or the fitness of the individual to carry on in a creative way.

The human mind is active, purposeful and efficacious, but its ends are meaningless unless there is a cosmic Mind. And if there is such a Mind the meanings of human life must survive in the only way they can, i.e., in continuing human experience. If human values are transitory they are subjective and therefore false. But that they are not false is shown in the experience of the reflective self which finds that reality persistently corrects its partial views and enables it to become real.

From this point, reached in *Thoughts on Death and Life,* Professor Hocking goes on to discuss the relativity of death. We should note first that the free self, creating that which is outside of nature, is not at the mercy of the perishings within nature. Can we imagine—critically, not fancifully—how this independence might make survival possible? What other worlds are there and how is passage from one to another possible? Let us go for an illustration to Bunyan's personal transition from waking to dreaming and back again as he described the journey to the Heavenly City. Doesn't this suggest an imaginable and conceivable change from a world with one kind of possibility and event to a world with another kind? And do we not see a similar change whenever we contemplate future action? What is free decision but passage to a world which did not exist and would not have existed except for our act? In consciousness there seems to be an inner plurality of perspective such as to suggest "the possibility of a well-developed world which seems to happen to us even while we are—in part—creating it." The idea of freedom thus shows the falseness of physical monism. And the fact is that space itself is plural. The non-Euclidean geometries have made us accustomed to the notion of different types of space. Relativity indicates that space and time are neither prior realities nor forms conditioning experience but are actually derivative from events. Indeed we participate all the time in other spaces such as those of the mirror, the painting on the wall, the dream, the book, and the projected act. Through them we understand that the self is a "hinge of transition" between a world of possibility and one of actuality. It has numerically different bodies, just as the body while skating is numerically different from the body at rest while deciding to skate. In part the body is a fact in the world of fact. It is also a function of the self serving the decisions of the self.

Does this mean simply that if there is survival it is only in a world of dreams, constructed by the imagination? Professor Hocking thinks not. The true criterion of the reality of a presented world is not its resistance to our will (dreams offer this) nor the fact that it is shared (the sharers may be in a dream) but the initiative it reveals through the cooperative activity it carries on with us. The real is that which is ever present to our consciousness, with which we are engaged in constant "conversation", and which persistently sets us right. Such a reality gives us a core of unity for our plural worlds and at the same time a criterion for distinguishing the actual from the subjective. There is an "Identical Thou" stamping its reality on all "conversations" or cooperative activities that are actual.

Thus the experience of a real world is an experience of its active source, and the criterion of reality, for the world and for the individual, is creativity. Our chance for survival depends on our ability to use our freedom to do the will of God. This conclusion, shown by analysis to be possible, becomes a conviction, and is charged with what James once called the electric current of belief, through the insights of love. For it is through love of another and in our yearning for another's immortality that the self wins an intimation of its own destiny. The author concludes with some brief but arresting comments on "The Experience of Dying" and a note on the beatific vision as offering a kind of fulfillment which supplements instead of contradicting the revelations of the progressive and continuous experience which is love.

Early in the book the suggestion is made that if there were no natural death, society might well be driven to a form of artificial death such as ostracism, lest the cumulative weight of authority should stifle the emergence of the new. "Were Adam, Noah, Socrates, Confucius still among us, how we would weary of the daily rumor of their views!" His readers will hope Professor Hocking realizes that his own half century of writing seems to them all too short and that his observations on the meaning of God and of immortality, as well as of the self, the good life, and freedom, will be followed by inquiries into many other meanings he is so uniquely equipped to explain. So far from stifling the new his influence has always stimulated it.

J. S. Bixler

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Faith and Knowledge. By JOHN HICK. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1957. xix, 221 pp.

The central thesis of John Hick's essay is a bold one these days: the man who says that he knows God is fully entitled to his claim. The religious interpretation of experience is as genuinely cognitive as our knowledge of an external world or of other selves. This is not a reiteration of the old, generally discredited claim to prove the existence of God by rational argument, for Hick calls his the first step in "a theology without proofs". His philosophical orientation would appear an unlikely one, that of the empiricism of those contemporary analytic philosophers who are the successors of the logical positivists of the 'thirties. Though philosophically "left wing" he claims allegiance to the theological "right" of neo-orthodoxy and maintains that he is restating John Oman's *The Natural and the Supernatural* for the present generation.

The plan of the book is simple. Part One gives a specification of the canons of knowledge and a description of belief. Part Two is a transition to the distinctively religious problem by means of an admirably lucid criticism of three rival theories of faith: the voluntarism of James and Tennant, the moral interpretation of Kant and Donald Baillie, and Newman's illative sense. The central section, Part Three, sets forth Hick's own views of the nature and logic of faith. An epilogue considers the specifically Christian claims.

This reviewer finds Hick far more successful in his development of Oman's line of thinking than in his adoption of analytic philosophy. Though apparently intended for the beginner in philosophy of religion, the book demands a degree of sophistication lest Hick's own rather odd views be mistaken as representative of contemporary epistemological opinion. A case in point is the philosophical prolegomenon of Part One. He clears the ground for his own theory by disposing of "the infallibilist theory of knowledge", the doctrine that "knowledge" refers to a state of mind that is incapable of error and is self-authenticating, while "belief" is reserved for all fallible cognitions. His refutation of infallibilism is simple (one suspects too simple): the obvious fact that we may claim to know and yet be in error indicates that there is no psychological difference between a state of knowing and a state of error; therefore, knowledge is not self-authenticating.

The corrigibility of all knowledge of fact is, of course, scarcely a

startling or novel doctrine. When Hick moves on to propose his own equation of knowledge with "subjective certainty," however, his position is both surprising and considerably shakier. Knowledge is to be understood as "the experience of absolute psychological certainty". While he admits a legitimate conceptual distinction between objective and subjective certainty, there is no difference at all experientially. Thus, "when we say, 'it is certain that . . . ,' we are entitled to mean only, 'I am certain that it is certain that. . . .' " (p. 16). To escape the obvious objection that the degree of conviction with which a belief is held has nothing to do with its truth, Hick adds the necessary qualification: "subjective certainty" must also be "rational certainty", where "rational" means arrived at judiciously and self-critically. Now this, of course, must be said. But one must then go on to specify what constitutes adequate grounds for being certain in any particular case. Hick rightly points out that the amount or type of criticism is not specifiable *a priori,* that there are as many legitimate ways to justify beliefs as there are kinds of belief, but for him the justification of belief is apparently of less importance than the ensuing feelings of confidence and security, along with the assurance that others ought to be equally confident. Surely, what is really of importance in deciding whether I am justified in saying "I know" is not so much my state of mind as my being in a position to give good grounds for my assertion.

Hick's description of religious knowledge and the circumstances in which it occurs is far more successful than his unnecessarily extreme scepticism. A man comes to believe in God, not by means of deductive or inductive inference, nor by an irrational act of the will, but by claiming to apprehend deity in and through his environment. Such a direct but mediated experience is not, Hick proposes, peculiar to religious knowledge: our knowledge of ethical values is also mediated through our natural environment. Just as we cannot prove a world of objects real apart from our minds or the existence of other selves toward whom we have social and moral responsibilities, so we cannot prove the existence of God. The logical possibility of solipsism shows that "our normal mode of experience" is an interpretation of our sensations. Yet we can properly say we know a real external world because we have no serious inclination or reason to doubt it. In an analogous way the religious "total interpretation" of experience claims to be a rational belief, or knowledge.

How do we know that theism is a reasonable interpretation like belief in an external world? Can it be verified? Theism purports to be the factual assertion that God exists. Now, for any assertion that something is the case, it should be possible to specify at least one situation which would be different if it were not the case. But if theism is a "total interpretation," asserting that everything is divinely created and providentially governed, there is nothing that could possibly tell against it. Thus it appears that the theistic assertion is meaningless—at least cognitively, though we may attribute to it emotive or persuasive meaning or the like. These are the currently fashionable terms in which Hick wrestles with the problem of religious meaning. He concedes that "theism is not an experimental issue. There is no test observation, no crucial instance such that if A occurs theism is shown to be true, while if B occurs theism is shown to be false" (p. 145). But, he goes on, it does not follow that it lacks empirical verification. His vindication has two stages: a defense of religion in general and of Christianity in particular. Characteristic of any religion, we are told, is the claim to personal survival after death. This claim is open to post-mortem confirmation though not to refutation. Although nothing can tell against it, it is nevertheless open to verification and is therefore meaningful. The same rather odd logic is displayed by Christian belief: it claims an eschatological confirmation, our future experience of the kingdom of God and the Beatific Vision. The different attitudes taken by the believer and unbeliever as they journey along life's road (the metaphor or "parable" is his) are not simply differences in emotion: one is feeling and acting appropriately, the other inappropriately, though which is which cannot be determined until "they . . . turn the last corner". While Hick's "eschatological predictability" does not purport to guarantee the truth of theism now, or indeed ever (a "satanic vision" would constitute a reasonable refutation, and even a Beatific Vision might be an hallucination), it does render religious assertions meaningful, he thinks, by showing that they are open to empirical confirmation. All that is required for knowledge is rational certainty, the exclusion of reasonable doubt. The experience of the Kingdom of God would place atheism and naturalism on a par with solipsism—logically possible but scarcely plausible.

Surely this "vindication" raises more questions than it settles. Is it so certain that some doctrine of immortality is essential to religion?

Hick himself defines religion later (pp. 181-182) without any reference to personal survival. While Christian orthodoxy does make such eschatological claims, there are always the heretics and heterodox. Are their assertions that "God exists" therefore meaningless? If even a mild dose of "demythologizing" is permissible, what meaning can we attach to "experience" in an after-life? Further, since we cannot achieve rational certainty now *in via,* how can there be religious knowledge here on earth? If this is the best justification of the meaningfulness of religious assertions that can be given in terms of the "significant difference" stipulation (and this reviewer is by no means convinced that it is), then either one ought to throw in the sponge or else abandon the stipulation as inapplicable to metaphysical statements the evidence for which is partly observable and partly in principle unobservable.

More impressive is Hick's putting to use the lessons he has learned, especially from H. H. Price and Oman, in illuminating the volitional character of belief. We first entertain a proposition in thought and then assent to or adopt it as true. Assent is a momentary act which sets up belief, a permanent disposition to act on the adopted proposition. Assent involves freedom and the consequent fallibility of judgment. At its lowest in the interpretation of natural significance, freedom increases as we interpret our environment aesthetically and morally and is at its maximum in religious interpretation. Theism and atheism are thus genuine options. God could not coerce use to acknowledge him without destroying our freedom and with it our status as persons.

In the last resort what distinguishes the theistic from the atheistic interpretation is, as he rightly observes, an ontological claim. The theist cannot view his experience as having only aesthetic or moral significance because he claims to have encountered God in and through the world. But can this ontological issue be settled? Hick's answer is instructive, for it reveals the limits of a philosophy that rules out ontology and hence of a "theology without proofs":

> Whether the theistic claim is justified is not a question for the epistemologist. . . . It is a question for each individual exercising his cognitive powers in relation to the environment in which he finds himself, and responding in his own personal freedom and responsibility to its claims and calls (190-191).

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BOOK NOTES

Prophecy and Religion in Ancient China and Israel, by H. H. Rowley. New York, 1956. 8vo. vi, 154 pp. Harper and Brothers. Price $2.75.

On the surface it might seem rather absurd to compare religion, and in particular the prophetic movement in Isreal, with religion in China, but the terms of the Jordan Lectureship in Comparative Religion, under which these lectures were delivered in London in 1954, demanded the bringing together of two religions, and as Professor Rowley has lived and taught in China, has some competence in Chinese, and has already written on Chinese religion and thought as well as on the Old Testament, the choice in his case was almost inevitable. Yet to the reviewer it is a strained comparison, from which emerges more clearly than ever the enormous gulf that separates religious thought in ancient China from prophetic religion as proclaimed in Israel. It is not merely that we have been from childhood familiar with the teaching of the prophets and with life in ancient Israel, whereas the teachings of Confucius, Mencius, Mo-tzu and Lao-tzu, and the background of Chinese history and Chinese life are strange, for even one who has been reading the literature on Comparative Religion for many years feels strongly that here we are facing two very different worlds between which comparisons cannot but be largely artificial.

Professor Rowley is well aware of this difficulty and on more than one occasion draws attention to the hazardousness of making comparisons. Yet the prophets of Israel were in some measure statesmen, so that it is possible to place their concerns in this matter alongside the very real concern for matters of state among the Chinese sages, and discuss the Prophet as Statesman. So also the prophets of Israel, like the sages of China, were anxious to bring about reforms in the social life of their times, and both they and the Chinese sages had some vision of ideal social conditions which might some day be realized, so it is possible to discuss the Prophet as Reformer, and the Prophet and the Golden Age. The comparisons become more doubtful, however, when it comes to the Prophet and Worship and the Prophet and God, for it is hard to think of the sages meaning the same thing as the prophets meant when they spoke of God and the worship due to Him.

The first lecture on the Nature of Prophecy is an excellent discussion, though it is mostly relevant to prophecy in the Semitic world. There is also much of interest to students of the Old Testament in the discussions which follow, but perhaps the greatest interest of all will be found in the contrasts, which the comparisons made here bring out so clearly, between the world of thought in which the Chinese sages lived and laboured and that of the Old Testament, contrasts which reveal afresh the enormous significance for religion of the prophetic movement in Israel.

Arthur Jeffery

The Legend of the Baal-Shem. By MARTIN BUBER. New York: Harper & Bros., 1955. xiii, 222 pp. $3.00.

The Tales of Rabbi Nachman. By MARTIN BUBER. New York: Horizon Press, 1956. 214 pp. $3.50.

It is good to have Buber's earliest works on Hasidism, published in German in 1906 and 1907 respectively, available in Maurice Friedman's excellent translations. The Baal-Shem volume had appeared many years ago, in an amateurish translation under the title of *Jewish Mysticism.*

These volumes shed much light on the development of Buber's thought. The interpretive essays which introduce each volume present Hasidism as a movement which ethicized and popularized the esoteric cosmological speculations of the Kabbalah, the Jewish mystical tradition. It adopted the teaching concerning the primordial cosmic catastrophe in which the sparks of the *Shekhinah*—the divine glory which dwells in the world—had become trapped in all earthly things, so that they were separated from their divine ground. Buber holds that the Kabbalah emphasized the speculative and magical elements of this teaching, whereas Hasidism, at its best, insisted that ethical actions by men in community would free the sparks and enable them to rise to union with the Godhead. Such action is truly messianic.

Buber's subsequent interpretations of Hasidism preserve the emphasis on the ethicizing of the doctrine of the sparks, but his views of the nature of the liberating act change. In these early volumes he emphasizes the rare moments of mystical ecstasy of the holy man who is empowered to raise the souls of the masses by means of them. In the later works,[1] the daily routine of men in all walks of life is the key; any act directed wholly to God is a hallowing act and liberates the sparks. Thus Buber's interpretations of Hasidism clearly reveal the movement of his thought from a concern with mystical ecstasy to a religious existentialism which emphasizes the relation between man and man in the dialogue of everyday life.

His manner of retelling Hasidic stories changed along with the shift in his interpretation of the movement. In *The Legend of the Baal-Shem,* the material is presented in extended poetical versions which stress the miraculous elements. By contrast, the first volume of the *Tales of the Hasidim* recounts the material in a pithy form which all but totally demagicizes the material and renders its religious impact more effectively.

The artful religious allegories of Rabbi Nachman did not lend themselves to this treatment. Therefore, aside from quoting some of his aphorisms in his collection of Hasidic sayings entitled *Ten Rungs,* Buber has not presented the teachings of this great master elsewhere. These tales are drenched with the agony induced by the separation of the *Shekhinah* from the Godhead

[1] *Hasidism.* New York, 1948. *Tales of the Hasidim, The Early Masters.* New York, 1947. *Tales of the Hasidim, The Later Masters.* New York, 1948.

and emphasize the fact that man must employ his years of wandering upon this earth to achieve the unification of his faculties into a *Gott-betrunken* totality. He may then perform the holy acts which will liberate the sparks and bring about the coming of the Kingdom.

MALCOLM L. DIAMOND

Landgraf Philip und die Toleranz. By FRANKLIN H. LITTELL. Bad Nauheim: Christian-Verlag, 1957. pp. 54.

This address was given by Dr. Littell on the occasion of his promotion to the honorary doctorate at the University of Marburg. Very appropriately he chose to speak about the tolerance of Philip of Hesse the founder of this university. He was the only prince among the Lutherans of his generation who refused to apply the death penalty to the sectaries and notably the Anabaptists. This is the more remarkable because some of the sectaries in his territory were of the revolutionary and fanatical variety. Even so he would not have recourse to the penalty of death. Banishment and imprisonment alone would he employ. But banishment did no good. The Anabaptists refused to stay away. They believed themselves to be commissioned to go into all the world and proclaim the gospel. The only remaining possibility was to lock them up and the prisons of Hesse were full. Philip was not willing to leave it at that. He sought to convert the imprisoned and to that end summoned the most sympathetic among the ministers to reason with the captives. Bucer came from Strassburg for the purpose. This tactic proved eminently successful in reclaiming the sectaries for the established churches, vastly more so than the policy of suppression. Those Christians who stood aloof from the world were stiffened by persecution but succumbed to friendliness.

The ground of Philip's tolerance was not the general respect or the general indifference which since the Enlightenment have often been the main ingredients in religious liberty. His ground was rather primitivism. This term is used by Littell to describe the point of view that the ideal state, whether sociological or religious, lay somewhere in the past, and further that this state should be restored in the present. Applied to Church History primitivism means that the apostolic time was the golden age and the reformation should consist in its restoration. Philip of Hesse along with the sectaries believed that the early church was the true and uncorrupted church. For that reason he was unwilling to constrain those who strove for a like objective, albeit with a wrong interpretation. A further consideration was that the early church had shed no blood over differences in religion.

This address is abundantly documented not only from the documents long available but also from the recently published Anabaptist sources for Hesse.

ROLAND H. BAINTON

The Essenes and Christianity. By DUNCAN HOWLETT. New York: Harpers, 1957. vi, 217 pp. $3.50.

This is a highly interesting and informative study of the materials found in the Dead Sea Scrolls; it was written by a Unitarian minister in Boston, with some assistance from two teachers at the Harvard Divinity School. Much of the book consists of an analysis of the major documents discovered at Qumran, an dof the archaeological finds. The Teacher of Righteousness is identified with Eleazar, the Pharisaic opponent of John Hyrcanus; the Wicked Priest, with Alexander Jannaeus. Howlett recognizes the hypothetical nature of both identifications.

In working out the main thesis of the book, however, the author passes beyond hypothesis to proclamation. Qualifications gradually disappear as he comes to argue that Jesus "appears either to have been an Essene himself at one time or to have been greatly influenced by them, probably through John the Baptist." (p. 185) Here the differences between Jesus and the Essenes, clearly set forth in an earlier chapter, seem to be disregarded. And the statement that "theologically Christianity was a spiritualization of Essenism, as Essenism had been a spiritualization of Pharisaism" (p. 187) seems exaggerated.

As for John the Baptist, the "remarkable similarity" between his message and that of the Manual of Discipline (p. 137) is perhaps not quite as remarkable as one might think. John took Isaiah to mean, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord.'" In the Manual of Discipline the text is understood as, "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord." This is not the same thing.

Howlett's attacks on his opponents make for lively reading. He finds that "churchmen" constantly resist new learning, such as the discovery that "Christianity germinated, took root, and enjoyed its first growth in Essene soil." (p. 202) But is it really new learning that we encounter in the statement that among the Essenes "the most perceptive . . . could not have failed to see that his [Jesus's] teaching flowed out of the mainstream of their heritage" (p. 172)? Couldn't they have? How do we know? Another interesting passage summarizes Walter Harrelson's "theological position" as the notion "that belief in Jesus as the Messiah distinguished the Christians from all other contemporary sects." Howlett then states that

> this may be theologically accurate: who is to say when a theology is right and when it is wrong? Factually considered, however, such a statement is incorrect. (p. 189).

He goes on to point out that followers of John the Baptist believed that he had been the Messiah. Surely this *is* correct; but what does it have to do with Harrelson's description of the New Testament church? Especially when Howlett himself has just said that "the faith has been stated variously but all

have agreed that the position of Jesus in the Christian religion is central." (p. 188)?

For this reason we prefer to call attention to the author's earlier statement that "scholarly reticence in regard to the Scrolls may be due both to scientific standards and [to] theological reticence" (p. 10). His enthusiasm for the Scrolls has led him, it seems to us, to overvalue them; in spite of what he says (p. 7), in the twentieth century there *have* been other significant finds of biblical manuscripts, and the existence of apocalyptic Judaism was already known before 1947. Moreover, the War Scroll would seem to provide some difficulty for those who wish to idealize these Dead Sea people. When they looked for the "final triumph of righteousness and the eternal rule of God's elect" (p. 17), they intended to take no prisoners and they knew that they themselves were the elect.

Perhaps those who insist on the importance of theological factors in dealing with such questions as this have not made clear enough what they mean by theology. Generally speaking, I think they do not mean any particular theology; perhaps "philosophy" would be a better word. They would claim that Howlett's insistence that he is simply being objective about the Essenes is theological (or philosophical). For instance, he regards the Essenes as analogous to the founders of New England, and the Jerusalem priesthood as analogous to the English Church (p. 197). Is this a purely historical comparison?

Because the book raises such questions and also provides a clear and competent picture of the Dead Sea community, it should prove a useful introduction for many readers. As its author points out, the Scrolls and the problems arising out of them are going to be with us for some time.

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INDEX

Articles and Communications

Bellah, Robert N.: The Place of Religion in Human Action 137
Buber, Martin: Hasidism and Modern Man 109
Ducasse, C. J.: Christianity, Rationality, and Faith 121
Fen, Sing-Nan: The Sane Piety 7
Rosenfield, Leonora Cohen: Peripatetic Adversaries of Cartesianism in 17th Century France 14
Westfall, Richard S.: Isaac Newton: Religious Rationalist or Mystic? 155

Arfa, M., review of Petuchowski, 92
Ashby, P. H., review of Burtt, 194
Asian Art: Bryner, 66; Zimmer, 50

Bixler, J. S., review of Hocking, 207
Booth, G., review of Jung, 203
Bronstein, D. J., review of Hutchison, 41
Bryner, E., *Thirteen Tibetan Tankas,* 66
Burch, G. S., review of Nikhilanda, 171
Burtt, E. A., *Man Seeks the Divine,* 194

Campbell, J., ed., *The Art of Indian Asia,* 50
Carrington, P., *The Early Christian Church,* 178
Christianity (historical)
  Early: Carrington, 178
  Modern: Rosenfield, 14; Festinger, 87; Harbison, 182; Havaszti, 81; Kingdon, 185; Landis, 84; Smith, 189; Westfall, 155;
Culler, A. D., *The Imperial Intellect: A Study of Newman's Educational Ideal,* 89

Dawood, N. J., *The Koran: A New Translation,* 78
Descartes: Rosenfield, 14

Eliade, M., *Mythes, rêves et mystères,* 58

Farmer, W. R., *Maccabbees, Zealots, and Josephus: Inquiry into Jewish Nationalism in the Greco-Roman Period,* 72
Festinger, H., Riecken, H. W., Schachter, S., *When Prophecy Fails,* 87

Garside, C., Jr., review of Kingdon, 185
Gaster, T. H., *The Dead Sea Scriptures in English Translation,* 73
Glock, C. Y., review of Festinger, 87

Hadas, M., review of Farmer, 72
Haraszti, Z., *The Bay Psalm Book: A Facsimile of the First Edition of 1640. The Enigma of the Bay Psalm Book,* 81
Harbison, E. H., *The Christian Scholar in the Age of the Reformation,* 182
Hardy, E. R., review of Carrington, 178
Hick, J., *Faith and Knowledge,* 211
Hideo, Kl, Howes, J. F., ed. and transl., *Japanese Religion in the Meiji Era,* 174
Hinduism: *Nikhilanda,* 171

Hirsch, E. F., review of Harbison, 182
Hocking, W. E., *The Meaning of Immortality in Human Experience,* 207
Holtom, D. C., review of Hideo, 174
Hutchison, J. A., *Faith, Reason, and Existence: An Introduction to Contemporary Philosophy of Religion,* 41

Islam: Dawood, 78; Watt, 76

Jeffrey, A., reviews of Dawood, 78; Watt, 76
Judaism: Buber, 109; Farmer, 72; Gaster, 73; Petuschowski, 92
Jung, C. G., *Symbols of Transformation,* 203

Kingdon, R. M., *Geneva and the Coming of the Wars of Religion in France,* 185
Kluckhohn, C., Review of Wyman, 63;

Landis, B. Y., ed., A Rauschenbusch Reader: *The Kingdom of God and the Social Gospel,* 84
Lansing, G. Y., review of Eliade, 58
Leary, L., review of Haraszti, 81

Mahler, J. G., reviews of Bryner, 66; Zimmer, 50
Messianism: Festinger, 87
Muilenburg, J., review of Gaster, 73

Newman: Culler, 89
Nikhilanda, S. edl, *The Upanishads,* 171

Petuchowski, J. J., *The Theology of Haham David Nieto. An Eighteenth Century Defense of the Jewish Tradition,* 92
Potter, J., review of Hick, 211
Primitive Religion: Wyman, 63
Psychology of Religion: Bellah, 137; Eliade, 58; Jung, 203;

Schiffman, J., review of Landis, 84
Smith, S., *Changing Conceptions of Original Sin,* 189

Theology: Burtt, 194; Smith, 189; Tillich, 194
Theory of Religion: Bellah, 137; Ducasse, 121; Fen, 7; Eliade, 58; Hick, 211; Hocking, 207; Hutchison, 41; Jung, 203
Tillich, P., Systematic Theology. Volume II Existence and the Christ, 194

Vlanov, B., review of Culler, 89

Watt, M. M., *Muhammad at Medina,* 76
Williams, D. D., reviews of Smith, 189; Tillich, 194
Wyman, L. C., ed., *Beautyway: A Navaho Ceremonial,* 63

Zimmer, H., *The Art of Indian Asia,* 50